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ITS NATURE, MEANING,  
PRINCIPLES, AND APPRECIATION



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By

PROFESSOR ALLEN W. SEABY,

*Professor of Fine Art in the University of Reading.*

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Byzantine Church of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople.

*Chevalier Gaspard Fossati*



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A SURVEY OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS  
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES

*By*

ALLEN W. SEABY

Professor of Fine Art in the University  
of Reading

Author of "Drawing for Art Students and Illustrators,"  
"The Roman Alphabet and Its Derivatives"

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## PREFACE

PEOPLE, especially young people, are asking to-day all sorts of questions relating to art. What is art? How can one appreciate it? How is one to distinguish between good and bad? Is the study of the art of the past of any use in aiding one to enjoy present-day art? and so on. In the following pages, it is pointed out that art is everywhere in our daily life. We cannot escape it. It meets us in our homes; our clothes, furniture, food vessels and pictures reflect our taste in art. All these things are what they are because of the past, and no true judgment concerning them can be formed without some study of man's past achievements. At this point we come in touch with education, and it is suggested here that education would do well to embrace art more freely, that art should no longer be the Cinderella of the academic family of studies, that the universities are the poorer for their neglect of the most ancient and potent of man's activities.

To give a slight indication of the riches awaiting the student, an attempt has been made to review the art of the past. Much has had to be omitted, but even so it is a supremely interesting story to unfold. Those who wish to read of the various movements in more detail, will find a fuller "outline" in the succeeding volumes of this series.

Thanks should be tendered here to various authorities for permission to reproduce photographs and make drawings, notably to those of the British Museum.

ALLEN W. SEABY.

The University of Reading.

*March, 1928.*



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## INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to state clearly and precisely what Art is, for it means so many things. Literature, the drama, music, architecture, sculpture, painting, and "the decorative arts," are all aspects of art; but the term comprises many more activities than these, for, broadly speaking, everything made by man is or can be art, as we see from the derivation of the word, to fit or join together; "artist" and "artisan" both come from the same root. Nowadays, we limit, perhaps unduly, the meaning of the word; we do not admit as art, those activities which are stimulated by necessity, such as the providing of food, shelter and clothing; art for us is a response to some creative impulse. The meaning is still further narrowed, when the title of "artist" is confined to the painter of pictures, whereas other art-workers, not to mention the musician, poet, author and actor, have an equal right to it. Certainly the artisan ought to be included, if the things he makes have fine form, even if they are only pokers or pots. The architect is or should be, as his title implies, the *chief* artist, for his art comprises building, sculpture, painting, mosaic, stained glass, and a host of other arts and crafts.

Art, in its *visual sense*, as already suggested, can be divided into the "arts of form" and the "arts of necessity," although these are constantly merging. For example, a house is a work of necessity inasmuch as it affords shelter, but it may be also a work of art, and the same is true of all the man-made things within it. There are forms of art, however, which are not useful, have no utilitarian value. A marble statue can add nothing to our bodily comfort unless it be sawn into masonry or thrown into the lime kiln, nor can an oil painting be of use, although there is the story of the needy painter, who replaced the lining of his waistcoat with an old canvas, and removing his coat one hot day, revealed a water-

fall foaming down his back. It is, perhaps, this aspect of art having no material value that has led many to regard it as a kind of trimming to life, something to dally with when the claims of work, food, sleep and recreation have been satisfied.

In the past art entered more fully into the life of the people. Everything they handled had fine form or colour. They could appreciate, no matter what their station in life, for the craftsmen were then artists, from the maker of kitchen pots to the mason at work on the carved capitals in the churches. To-day, however, even those who sense the importance of art and wish to understand, glance at fine buildings, sculpture or pictures, certain only that they do not appreciate them; the finer the work the more puzzled are they. They cannot get pleasure from what they see, for one cannot appreciate a work of art as one enjoys the scent of a flower or the taste of food. Art does not appeal to the sense of sight alone; the mind must have been prepared beforehand. If art is to enter into our lives, some discussion of its essentials and history is as necessary as study of literature for those who wish to read intelligently.

Education, unfortunately, seems as reluctant now as in Ruskin's day to be burdened with the study of art. Universities, engrossed with philosophy, letters and science, do not realise the value of art as a serious study; they remain blind to its variety of interests and diversity of material, and to the light it might reflect on history and letters. Imagine, say, French literature and history being studied without reference to its art, or our own eighteenth century, which, without Hogarth and the other painters, the architects, decorators and furniture makers, would remain unilluminated. Nor is art to be considered merely a handmaid to other studies. In itself it contains all the elements of culture; as a study *it is education*. It develops the critical side of us, and in these days, may well make us dissatisfied with our surroundings, such as ugly houses and homes.

Art, however, is not negative only, not merely the elimination of the foolish and the ugly. As we have seen it is positive and creative. As an artist, man is most himself; he becomes a creator and to that extent, god-like. He takes

the clay from the field, stone from the rock, jewels from the pebbles, and from such inert material creates living works of art, glowing with colour and fine of line, not Nature, yet of her essence. Apart from man, art does not exist. The glowing sunset, the hues of flowers, birds and insects would shine just as brightly if the artist were not here to see in them motives for his own creations. The achievements of the past, of impressive architecture, noble sculpture, fine painting and other revelations of man's powers of expression, constitute a world of his own making, the world of art, brought into existence through human desire and emotion.

Life without art is poor and starved, yet we can have, *merely by looking at it*, what is literally the wealth of the ages. Little remains to us of the past save its art. Princes and politicians have bequeathed nothing except dates of battles and statutes constantly becoming obsolete. Meanwhile the art workers went quietly on their way leaving things behind which are joys for ever. Through this one sense of sight, all that is of artistic value may be *possessed*, for a work of art looked at with interest, lodges in the memory, an abiding possession, just as a passage from a poet once memorized, may be recalled at will. The lines of Keats, commencing, "Glory and loveliness have passed away," can be learned by heart in ten minutes, to remain with one while memory lasts.

Nor must the practical side be overlooked. The crying need in the world of business is for an understanding of art; the more divorced from art the uglier and more ill-made are our manufactures. The remedy lies in the art of the past. It must be studied, its principles elucidated, and the great break in the chain of tradition mended. It is when things are made, buildings put up without reference to the past, as if new forms could be invented by sheer ingenuity, that the worker goes most astray, and perpetrates shocking blunders. The study of the fine products of the best periods may save us from the discomfort of ugliness.

So far we have not referred to the moral factors underlying art in human life. Whole libraries have been written on the subject, and there is no intention here of engaging in such a discussion. This much may safely be said, that

art calls to the good in us ; by it we may be uplifted and inspired. The evil in us is not encouraged ; we are not made crafty, cowardly or cruel by the presence of works of art ; their effect is ennobling. The study of art may stir us to resolutions and deeds of which otherwise we might have deemed ourselves incapable ; for in art is inherent the good struggling up within us. What are the qualities which, to-day, are most worthy of development ? Let us put down truth, courage, tenacity and tenderness, and examine a work of art chosen almost at random, say Holman Hunt's *Shadow of Death*, to ascertain if any of these qualities emerge (Plate II). There is *courage* in the choice of subject, for at the time when it was painted many might deprecate an episode not vouched for by holy writ. *Truth* is revealed in every corner of the picture. Hunt took the greatest trouble to get his facts right, and his characters true to type. He made long journeys to the East, to see things for himself, and we may be sure that every detail is as correct as his observation could make it. There is *tenacity* in his handling ; he would not let anything go in his pictures until he had said his last word on it : the shavings on the floor are worked out as if they were worth their weight in gold. There is *tenderness* of a quite poignant sort ; we cannot see the face of Mary, but by her arrested movement, her fixity of look, we know that she is aware ; that some foreboding of the future obtrudes itself. In a work of art these qualities are always present ; as we study it, they call to us, and we recognize them in ourselves.

Lastly let us bring the matter to a practical issue. What can those do who are without aptitude for art work, whose only reactions towards art consist in the enjoyment of it, in receiving with gladness its message to the eye ? Well, to provide an audience is something, for the artist craves for appreciation, can hardly exist without it, and by our encouragement, perhaps our patronage, we are helping the artist to convey his message ; we, as it were, collaborate with him.

There is, too, another consideration implied in the question. Art is a stimulus. We may not be artists ; we may never paint, carve or model, but we are, every one of us, good for something ; we all have some aptitude which we should





The Shadow of Death

W. Holman Hunt

*City Art Gallery, Manchester*



cultivate. It may happen that while looking at a picture, reading a book or listening to music, the question asks itself, "What can I do? What task can I find? What taste can I develop?" Talents are various, but their effect is the same; they raise the individual, they increase the sum total of human achievement. It is our responsibility to find out what we can do, and do it with our might.

## TASTE, AND ITS CULTIVATION

IN this age, we are proud of our advanced civilisation, of the resources of science, and the inventions and conveniences which add so much to our comfort ; yet it would be no more than the truth, to assert that with our boasted progress, our homes become less beautiful. Nay, they grow uglier if that were possible, both without and within. It is a mournful fact that the amplifying of our resources, our swollen mass

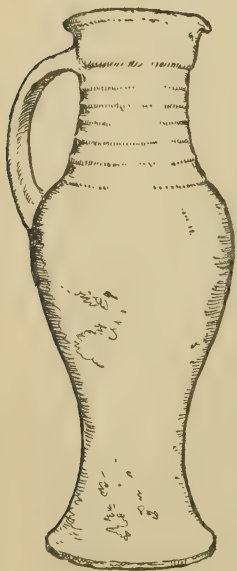


FIG. 1. A fourteenth century pitcher.

production, does not make us equal, as regards taste, to those who had not our advantages. As far back as the middle ages, although the streets may have been as dirty as a modern Italian slum, and sanitation entirely lacking, yet the people of these days had taste. Treasured in museums lie rare specimens of mediæval pottery, fine in line and beautiful in colour, yet for the most part they are kitchen pieces, made solely for use (Fig. 1). The old time craftsman, perhaps a brutal man, ready to bait a bull, or drown a witch, would stand aghast at the ugliness of our houses and their equipment.

It is perhaps typical of our age that there are people who say in effect, give us comfort, never mind about art, forgetting that there is a comfort for the eye as well as for the body, that an ugly room, ugly furniture or bad arrangement may destroy our comfort, although we may not be quite clear why we are uncomfortable.

There are many, however, who crave vaguely for beauty and beautiful things, and would like to surround themselves with such. A rich collector may amass pictures, statuettes, enamels, manuscripts and china, all perfect of their kind; are those who are not so fortunate to be content with bare walls? Surely not, for man has always decorated his possessions and nature gives warrant for ornament. Meadows studded with flowers, the sky flecked with clouds, the tracery of branches in winter, the foliage of summer, the coloured fruits amongst the leaves, the patterns on the wings of birds and insects, all these are instances of natural beauty. The difficulty lies in the interpretation of the word. A desire for "pretty" things does not always coincide with good taste, indeed it often fills rooms with rubbish. Photographs, useless furniture, cheap plaques and china, shells, dried grass and other oddments have nothing to do with the decoration of a room and only remind one of a sixpenny bazaar. If we cleanse our walls of these things, what can we substitute? That depends somewhat on our pocket, but more directly on our taste. Let us consider for a moment the work of two famous decorators.

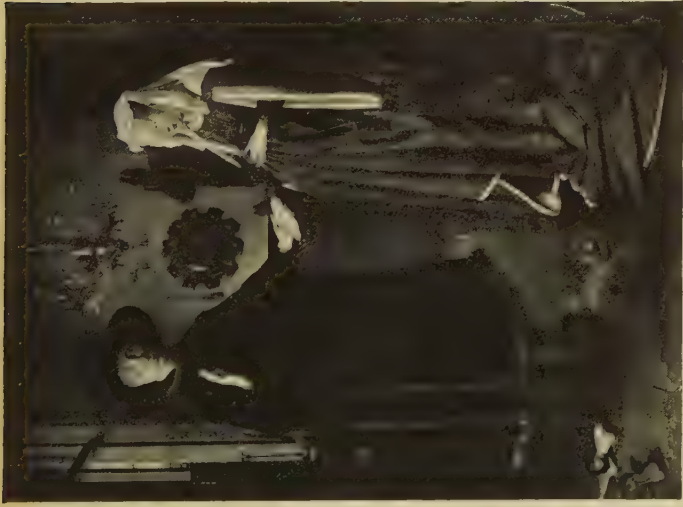
With Morris and Whistler two rival schools of decoration arose, and we see signs of the controversy to this day. William Morris, mediævalist and poet, made of the home a refuge from the ugly world outside. He decorated it with carving, figured tapestry, stained glass, embroidery and carpets; it was a temple where one worshipped art, and refreshed one's soul. To Whistler, however, a room was but a background for a good picture. Wherever he went, and he moved frequently, he covered the tawdry wallpapers and ugly woodwork with soft tones of grey. Then he hung his picture, shut off from extraneous disturbance, and enhanced by the sympathetic tone of his background.

It is to be noticed that both types of decoration demanded the best. Pictures were not essential to an ideal Morris scheme of decoration; the hangings and carpets were in themselves works of art. In the Whistler scheme, the work of art was isolated, and that was sufficient. Both secured beauty, each in his own way. The less recent past has



lessons for us in interior decoration. The room in the Van Eyck picture is that of wealthy burghers, and although the metal-work is rather ornate, everything is perfect of its kind and the whole effect very fine (Plate III). There was good taste among the merchants of Bruges. In the Dutch interior by Vermeer, the quiet walls, the sparkle of the frames and the dress of the woman all go well together (Plate III). Millet's picture of French peasant life is of quite another sort, being the home of folk wretchedly poor, but again there is nothing discordant (Fig. 2). It may be said that these rooms are satisfactory because everything in them has been made by hand, the furniture, metalwork and stuffs all the work of craftsmen too proud to make rubbish, or compelled by their guilds to keep up the standard of their wares. The great force behind good work, however, was tradition, another name for taste. The practice of craft work is itself an education in taste. Our schools of art have justified their existence by the training in taste they have given to many, apart from their vocational courses. Tradition having been swept away, however, by mass production, the question presses for answer, "Is it the machine which is responsible for the general lowering of taste and tame acceptance of rubbish?"

At the outset we must make clear to ourselves what constitutes a machine, for in a sense all tools are machines and all machines tools. The great steam-hammer is after all but a hammer. It may smite harder than a man can, but it cannot tap more gently. "Power" only puts forth more strength; it must not work faster than human beings can tend the machines. If the machine can turn out goods in larger quantities than by hand, these are not necessarily ill made. Things like motors, bicycles, rifles and ships are made to a great extent by machinery, but they are perhaps the very things which after ages may recognise as beautiful. Our architecture, sculpture and painting, they may say, are mere imitation of what has been done before; these machine-made objects although without artistic intention, yet because of their stark fitness for their use, have a beauty which is characteristic of the age in which they were made. A service rifle for instance carries no unnecessary ornament; every



Interior

J. van Eyck

*National Gallery*



Interior

Vermeer

*National Gallery*





FIG. 2. An Interior, after Millet.

projection or hollow has a function, and a deadly one, to shoot far and straight. The result is an object with a grim and sombre beauty.

Unfortunately when use is lost sight of the machine can turn out terribly bad things ; it produces rubbish as easily as good work, unlike the old-time craftsman who had tradition in his head to keep him straight. The manufacturer trades on a supposed love of *novelty*. Everything has to carry an element of unexpectedness ; the object is twisted out of the form proper to it. Plates and bowls, things essentially of circular shape from their birth on the wheel, are flattened, pinched or scalloped. Tin boxes for confectionery are especially victims to poor and foolish design ; stamped out as they are by machinery, they can be given any shape ; they have been made in the disguise of volumes of Shakespeare or even a scout's waterbottle. These senseless disguises are the manufacturer's measure of our intelligence and taste. Sometimes imitation is harmless ; no one is deceived by a gilded picture frame into believing it to be of solid gold. As some one has said, it is just as moral to spread butter thin as to eat it in lumps. The veneers of walnut and rare woods used in furniture are not so much deceit, as the outcome of a desire to spread the butter thin, to make an expensive and beautiful material go further. All around us, however, are imitations without taste or reason. Metal bowls spun by machinery, have marks simulating the facets of the hammer, but *added* after by another machine ! Wallpapers are patterned to look like canvas ; linoleum must pretend to be mosaic or carpet, and slate is elaborately treated to make us believe it marble. In all these examples it is not the machine which is at fault but the taste of the manufacturer and the purchaser. Imitation is, however, not a modern failing ; even the ancient Egyptian had his front porch of wood and plaster painted to look like granite.

We see something akin to imitation in jewellery, which is not, in a narrow sense, for use ; its only purpose is to enhance personal charm. Here one would expect the designer, who is often the maker, to spend himself in devising beautiful shapes and colour arrangements out of beautiful materials, yet how often do we see trinkets which in a sense have not



been designed at all, but are given the shape of a creature, bird, butterfly, even salmon and grouse? Unless we rank ourselves with the superstitious of old time and regard jewellery as a charm or amulet, to bring good luck or avert the evil eye, it is plain that by such lazy design the maker is but saving himself trouble, is trading on our love of nature.

A glaring example of want of taste is seen in the use of lettering with debased forms. The twenty odd forms of the capitals have come down from heaven, as it were, by way of Rome. The letters of the inscription on the column of Trajan (Fig. 3) belong as much to us as to the past, and if we meddle with their fine forms we may render them illegible. It is to be regretted that the modern artist with his ideas of distorting form in order to express his concep-



FIG. 3.

tions, has felt it necessary to interfere with lettering, sometimes reversing the position of the thick and thin strokes. The alphabet, however, was invented by right-handed people, the thick strokes of the A, V, W, etc., are right-handed, and if we alter this arrangement, we betray our ignorance of lettering and its history.

After all this criticism directed against modern industrial art it is cheering to know that there are still workers untouched by this taint of novelty, imitative effect, or pseudo-artistic bias. There is good work done everywhere by people who would be surprised to learn that they were artists. Wood seems to lend itself to capable, clean workmanship. A little workshop among the Berkshire hills turns out bowls large and small by the aid of a primitive wheel, the power of which is supplied by the elasticity of a sapling. For a small hand-bowl, the worker thoughtfully selects a section of a tree provided with a branch which can be made into a handle (Fig. 4). Then there are tools as the garden spade, of which

the handle is curved with subtlety, and the whole almost uncannily adapted (like the chair) to the human frame. A hay-wain again is a beautiful object with finely curved lines; it was deemed worthy to serve as the hearse for the body of William Morris. And there are the fine things already mentioned, motor cars and ships where beauty emerges from attention being paid to use.

As mass production continues to develop, it looks as if taste must be determined by the *fitness* of the objects around us. Let us suppose that a house, with all the things in it, could be perfectly constructed, everything fit for its function.

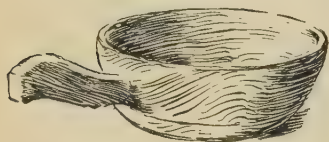


FIG. 4. A wooden bowl.

Even if the whole were made by machinery, the effect might be good, not a sensuous beauty perhaps, somewhat severe and plain, yet one we might after a time recognise and be grateful for. How are things made fit? We have all suffered

from the teapot which does not pour out properly, the reason being, of course, that it is ill-designed. If a manufacturer makes, say, a hundred thousand of an article, all exactly alike, there is no excuse for turning out something unsuited for its purpose; if the thing does not work, it means that not enough trouble has been taken in designing it. The design or model should be made and remade, until the article is *perfect*, is fit for the use to which it is to be put, no matter how cheaply it is to be retailed. The cost of the models is only a trifle compared with the profit on the vast quantity sold. Such care for *use* justifies the machine, and this attention to fitness might cleanse the home of rubbish and set taste on a new level.

## BEAUTY AND ART

IN any discussion of the nature of art, the word "beauty" very soon turns up, blocking the way until some agreement is reached. We all think we can recognise and appreciate "natural beauty," the hues of sunset or flowers, the forms and movements of animals, but we are on less safe ground when we associate beauty with human beings. Mothers think their babies beautiful, while the smiling face appearing on the magazine covers testifies to a limited conception both of beauty and of cover decoration. Whatever its nature, however, if beauty is not to escape us, we must use our eyes; it is something seen, that is, of course, if it is the kind we are discussing, "visual" beauty. Music is perceived by another sense; on the music paper, the eye sees only groups of lines with queer little dots and marks on them, yet these symbols can be translated by a musician into beautiful sounds. Again, nothing can be duller to look at, hour after hour, than pages of print (unless one is interested in the shapes of letters); but the eye is unconscious of the monotony, because the mind is taking in the interest or beauty of the thought.

We may assume that beauty preceded art. Man expressed his feeling for the beauty of animals, of flowers and the patterns nature laid before him. While nature presents, however, her ancient beauties apparently unaltered, art wanders along with man changing with his ideas and desires. One of the characteristics of modern art (shared in to some extent by ancient Crete) is the search for beauty in unlikely places. In the eighteenth century the drawing master and his pupil sought for picturesque ivy-covered ruins, frowning castles and pillared crags, romantic forests and angry seas; these were considered the only fitting subjects for the art of landscape. Photography, in its early days, had to reckon with this fashion; the sitter had to pose before a leafy back-

ground and recline gracefully against a rustic bench. Even Turner dates himself by his submission to the demands of his time for picturesqueness. To-day our eyes are opened more widely; we can see beauty in the crowded street as well as in the most peaceful rural scene, for there is form, colour, grouping and atmosphere in the first as much as in the second. In the street, however, we may be jostled by people who fail to see us, who are in fact so immersed in their own thoughts, so occupied with their own troubles perhaps, that for the time being their eyesight does not suffice them for the ordinary affairs of life. If they are heedless of their fellow travellers on the pavement they must be equally oblivious of the beauty present around them. The street for instance may be bathed in violet grey shadow, like a dim arcade and in the vista a tall building gleaming in full light; a picture to be seen every day in a great city like London, in which too the architecture of the sky, constantly presents the most beautiful pearly tints and faint smoky blues.

Unfortunately "beauty" is often narrowed to "loveliness," the charm of the female face, and this anthropomorphic notion of beauty prevents our seeing it in other directions. We can glimpse these by noting the subjects chosen by the artist. Chardin was satisfied mainly with still life; a loaf, glass of wine and a ham-bone was enough for him, and from these unpromising materials he built up beautiful chords of harmony (Plate IV). Corot saw beauty in the dawn or dusk; he rejected the bright hues of sunshine, and was satisfied with the pearly grey of sky and the russets and grey greens of foliage and grass, with only the occasional blue of a blouse or a touch of red on a cap.

Monet painted more than a dozen great pictures of the same two mean little haystacks in a meadow, under all the changes of light from dawn to dusk and of seasonal change from summer to winter; but as he said, the light was his real subject. Velasquez might have made the same comment, for his pictures of the court dwarfs, poor, deformed and mentally deficient creatures are enveloped in the cool light of his studio, made glorious by his mastery of tone. (Fig. 5).



Still Life

J. B. Chardin

*National Gallery*







FIG. 5. A Court Dwarf. After Velasquez.



Visual beauty then is everywhere and if our eyes and the mind behind them are receptive, at any moment some aspect may call for our admiration—our reverence—for beauty arouses wonder which is not far from worship. If we fail to see beauty, art also will be lost to us. The great art teacher, Moody, wrote that a dead sparrow would enable a designer to arrange the marqueterie of a cabinet in faultless harmony. He meant that the browns, greys and buffs of the poor little bunch of plumage, were beautiful in their relations and quantities. As ugly as a toad is a commonplace. Yet



FIG. 6.

the unexpectedness of shape, the alert gold rimmed eye, the warty knotted skin, with its cunning little folds and twists, the way the creature suits the ground, and seems a part of it, all these make up what is uncommonly like beauty (Fig. 6).

What use does art make of natural beauty? It is commonly supposed that the artist has nothing to do but copy from nature, and the most life-like painting of a

person, horse, or landscape is the most highly praised, much as a musician is applauded for making bells ring, horses neigh, and imitating the sound of the marching of feet, or a writer who puts down the swear words in the conversation. The statue must have frock-coat and top hat if the person portrayed wore these garments; the painted portrait, as people say, "steps out of its frame," like the actors in "Ruddigore." What artistic purpose is served, however, by making a counterfeit? There are none of us so satisfied with ourselves that we could endure meeting our double in flesh and blood. The ignorant have always, even in Greek times, applauded this trick of illusion, making painted things look "real." Zeuxis painted grapes so that the birds came and pecked them. Philip the Fourth on entering the studio of Velasquez, and beholding the portrait of the admiral Pulido

(now in the National Gallery), uttered words of rebuke supposing he saw his servant in bodily presence before him. There is the story of the mischievous apprentice who painted a fly on the shoulder of his master's portrait, and the painter was deceived into trying to flick it off with a duster. On the stage, we sometimes note strenuous efforts to produce realistic effects, although it does not seem that the art of acting benefits by the illusion.

In short, to deceive the eye perhaps the most easily deluded sense organ, to imitate merely, is not nor can be art. Of course, in some forms of art, as portraiture, imitation necessarily enters, but the painter's aim is, or should be, not to make a double by artful means as thickening the high lights to bring them forward, or hiding the borders of the picture and using cunning lighting, so that the surface disappears, like the deceptive paintings we saw at Wembley. A distinction is often made between "realistic" and "decorative" painting. All painting should be decorative, but the delicately detailed

realism of Vermeer or the Belgian, Alfred Stevens, lavished on a small canvas and meant to be examined closely, would be out of place in a great fresco occupying a whole wall. Here strong contrasts of light and shade, and realistic touches, as remarked elsewhere, would tend to obliterate the wall, so far as our sight was concerned.

It is important, then, to realise that art is not so much imitation as expression. The stone carvers of the middle ages carved not particular plants, but the character common to all plants, the feeling of *growth* (Fig. 7). The brothers Martin, famous for their pottery, loved to relate their ware with natural form. One of them would carry for days, say

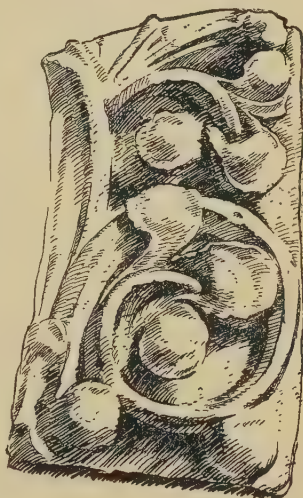


FIG. 7.

the claw of a lobster in his pocket, would take it out and observe its porcelain like polish, its knobs and ridges, its colour and markings; later a vase would come from the kiln, not imitating a lobster or its claw, but owing something of its shape and surface to the natural form, "lobsterish" in its colour, glaze, and ornament. Or another time the iridescent shard of a beetle was conned over, and a lusted gold flecked vase might result.

Perhaps the best test of beauty is our memory of it. Something caught our attention, a face, a landscape, a bird or a flower, and we can recall the vision more or less distinctly. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, whether natural or man-made.

## PROPORTION

To say that a person has a sense of proportion is to pay a great compliment. A teacher in criticising a student's essay may remark that it lacks proportion, or a drawing may be stigmatized as ill-proportioned. How does one gain a sense of proportion or develop it? Being human our sense of proportion is bound up with our stature of mind and body; we judge everything from our own standpoint. A giraffe seems to have a ridiculously long neck, because we ourselves have shorter necks. We are aware when we see an ill-proportioned person, although we are not perhaps so quick to admire a finely proportioned figure, for the proportions are so subtle that it requires a well-trained eye to see them.

So intimate is the relation of proportion with one's own bodily stature that art students have great difficulty in drawing figures other than their own. Tall people draw tall figures and vice versa, and although it is hard to believe, the same holds good for inanimate objects. This has been demonstrated by experiment. On one occasion, a class taking memory drawing was set as an exercise, a lamp-post. It was found that the heights of the lamp-posts in the drawings varied with the heights of the students!

No one is more sensitive to criticism of his proportions than the architect, for unlike some other artists he has to finish his task and leave it exposed to criticism; he cannot rub it out as one erases a drawing. The painter can scrape the paint from his canvas or commence anew; the poet revises his verses or the musician his notes, but a building once erected, its proportions whether good or bad are plain for all to judge. Hence architects have hankered after canons or systems by which bad proportion shall be avoided,

and have tried by research to discover the secrets of the Greeks ; but experiments with "Golden Sections" and square roots seem in the end to give much the same results as would be arrived at by a well trained eye.

Certainly, buildings, in their proportions, should be related to those of human beings. A building is ill proportioned if the eye cannot take in the scale. The interior of St. Peter's, at Rome does not reveal its vast size, because everything has been enlarged beyond what the eye expects. Even the cupids on the pilasters are larger than the adults passing below them. Again few will believe that the Victoria Tower at Westminster is only about twenty feet less in height than St. Paul's Cathedral. The windows and the portal of the former are so immense in scale that the eye refuses to accept their real dimensions, and sees a moderately high tower instead of a huge one. It seems clear that the parts of a building should bear some relation to human needs. Doors for instance do not gain in impressiveness by being made sixty feet high while the majority of people are less than six feet. The great portals of the French cathedrals are immense rather in their sculptured recessing, and the eye continuing its gaze to the actual entrance way is able to grasp the scale easily.

We get good proportion in tools in common use, for they must necessarily fit the hand or accord with average human strength. A spade has its blade of a certain width ; if it were wider it would be unusable, and it would *look* ill proportioned. A hammer head must bear some relation to its handle and the same may be said of the business end of knife, fork or spoon. The further we get from this simple test of use, however, the more we have to rely on an innate or a cultivated sense of proportion. For example, a weaver has to settle, say, the widths of the stripes of a scarf. This may be decided by conforming to what seems to be a natural dislike of seeing unrelated things made the same shape or size. The bands of the scarf must be of different widths if they are to please the eye. (Plate IX). Again a window should not be the same width as the space between two of them. The proportions of the mount of a picture require consideration. If we place the picture centrally on



FIG. 8. Proportion in Margins.

In the upper figure the top and bottom margins are equal, in the lower the bottom margin is wider than the top.

the mount, the former looks too low, seems to be slipping off the mount, especially if the subject be a landscape where the darker masses of trees or buildings occupy the lower part. The picture has to be raised until it *seems* to be placed in the middle (Fig. 8).

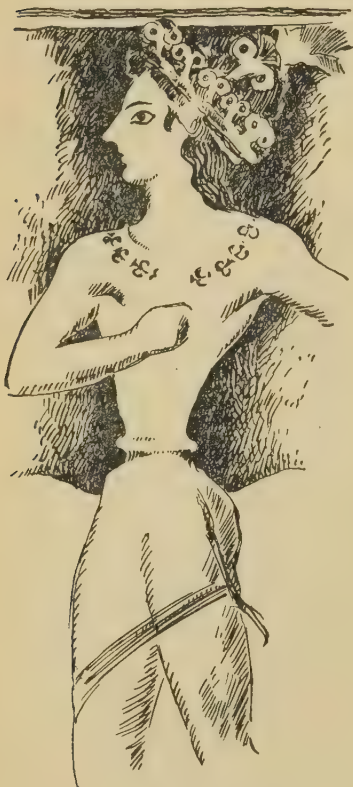


FIG. 9. Cretan Fresco.

The criticism that a thing looks top heavy is a way of calling attention to bad proportion. In women's dress wide brimmed hats inevitably call for flounces or other contrivances for widening the figure; otherwise one has the sensation of a head being too big for the body. Sometimes fashion biases feeling for proportion. The ancient Cretan figures are wasp-waisted because apparently the people pinched themselves with a tight belt; they wanted to look like that (Fig. 9). Again bad proportion in art may be due to external conditions. The Sumerians could not get blocks of suitable size and fitted their figures to the block, not finding it in their hearts to waste so much material.

Fig. 10 is all right to the waist, but a little lower, and we come at once to the feet.

The Greeks, alone of all the ancient nations, developed such a keen interest in human proportions that their standard



has been accepted, ever since, without question. The Greek canon or rule for construction of the human figure was, however, only one instance of their sense of proportion. Proportion was a passion with them. They were content to develop a simple columnar type of building, refining its proportions for centuries until they reached high-water mark in the Parthenon. They made experiments in their early or archaic days with huge temples, but abandoned them for erections of more modest dimensions which the eye grasped easily; these were divided again into a few parts which were related in perfect proportion.

Can proportion be taught? What can be done in school to develop it? Of course every school subject involves practice in proportion; there is even a section of arithmetic known by that name. The wise teacher will see to it that proportion enters into the teaching, even if only as a basis of criticism. The drawing lesson, of course, is directly concerned with proportion.

The purpose of school drawing is not to make artists (although it is important that the artistic capability innate in the young should be given adequate expression); drawing, like other subjects, should help to make good citizens. It may sound fanciful, but it would be hard to deny that learning to draw in right proportion may be a step towards seeing life in right proportion, ignoring the little things, to fasten attention on the big facts, to take long views. To



FIG. 10. Sumerian Statue.

attain this end drawing must be taught by methods calculated to obtain good proportion. If the pupil is allowed to begin at the top, and finds that the figure cannot be completed below for lack of room, then opportunities for training the sense of proportion are being wasted. A drawing should proceed, like an exercise in written composition, by orderly stages; the ground, as it were, should be surveyed at the commencement, outlying points being marked, and a line found which contains the whole or gives the chief direction. The main facts being rightly placed, the drawing can proceed to its completion without hesitation or fumbling.

## RHYTHM

ATTEMPTS have been made to reduce art to the observance of certain abstract "principles," as balance, proportion, unity and contrast. Such analysis must necessarily fail of its purpose, for the keeping of rules is negative, whereas art is positive and creative. Indeed one might almost affirm that there is only one principle underlying beauty and art, of which all others are but aspects, facets of a jewel, as it were. This controlling principle, which can be recognized throughout the universe, is rhythm. We all have a general idea of what rhythm is in music and poetry, although it is much more than rhyme in verse and accent in melody. Everyone has noticed variations where one might have expected mere

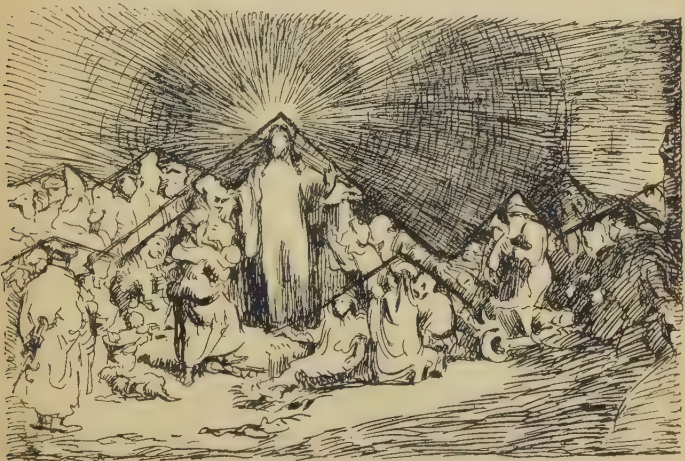


FIG. II. After Rembrandt.

repetition. Thus the ticking of a clock or the pounding of the wheels of a train, transforms itself into a tune, rhythm in sound. On the sea-shore, we say that the seventh wave is the highest; we see rhythm in movement. A mediæval cathedral with its spires and pinnacles of varying heights is an example of this wave-like



FIG. 12. After Watteau.

rhythm. Another form of rhythm consists in the containing line. Walter Crane used to illustrate this by drawing a number of ducklings clustering together so that they looked like one adult duck. Or he drew the curve of a spray of flowers, each blossom fitting into its place. If we pass the hand round any plant, a curve will be described, leaf, flower, and twig uniting to supply a bounding line. Illustrations of natural rhythm could be multiplied, but in art the principle can be seen most clearly perhaps in pictures, because owing

to the conditions of confined, definite space, pictorial composition, which is another name for rhythm, has to be considered. Let us examine for instance Rembrandt's etching, known as the "Hundred Guilder Print," of Christ healing the sick. Here the dramatic effect depends on the rhythm of the pyramids or peaks formed by the groups of figures (Fig. 11).



FIG. 13. After Millet.

The highest, sharpest pyramid is that formed by the Christ. Around are grouped other pyramids ; on the right they break up and topple over, as if there were an infinity of sick folk coming to be cured. Even the light and dark of the composition is rhythmical, harmonising with the rhythm of the forms.

Now we will turn to another picture, one of the *Fêtes Galantes* of Watteau. How different is the sentiment from that of Rembrandt ? With no thought of the disasters soon to overtake them these daintily-clad revellers indulge in a



make-believe of the Golden Age (Fig. 12). But the method employed in the picture, the rhythm, is exactly the same as in Rembrandt's composition, the figures are built up in pyramids of varying heights. Both pictures follow the same old rule of composition, although the subjects are worlds apart.

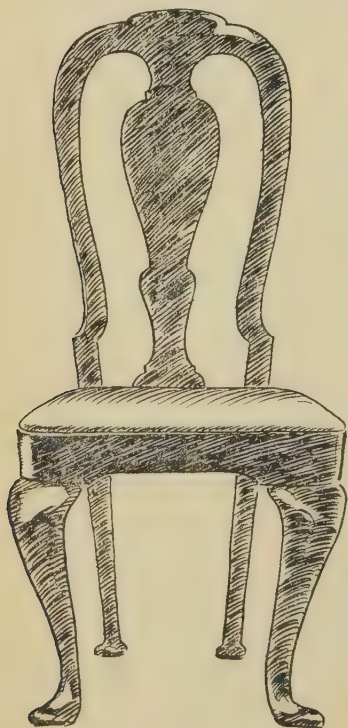


FIG. 15. Dutch chair.



FIG. 14.

For another aspect of rhythm we may examine Millet's "Angelus." The two labourers, at the sound of the evening bell, have ceased work and bow their heads in prayer. How has the painter succeeded in making the figures so completely unified? He did it by drawing a great curve, which holds the two together, or rather the spectator is forced to draw it, although unconsciously (Fig. 13).

In every good picture is to be seen rhythm, of form, of light and shade and of colour. What is rhythm of colour? Every girl with blue eyes knows that they look bluer if she wears a blue

brooch, or a blue ribbon in her hair, and yet the colour of these may be vastly stronger than that of the iris. One might have expected that the stronger blue would dim the colour of the eyes. The reason they brighten it is that whenever one perceives a note of strong colour, the eye's sense of rhythm impels it to search for more of the hue in the immediate vicinity. In this case the blue of the iris

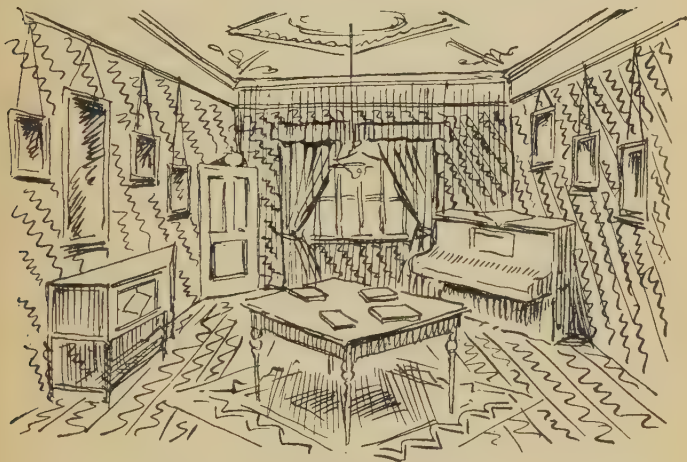


FIG. 16. Oblique restlessness.

receives recognition and hence appears bluer than it otherwise would. All good pictures (and patterns) exhibit rhythm of colour in varying phases and degrees. If we examine Vermeer's *Lace Spinner*, in the Louvre, we can see that he made deliberate use of colour rhythm. He employed notes of clear colour, yellow, red, orange and blue, and round these he grouped masses of quieter tones which are recognised by the eye as colours because of their relation to the master hues (Fig. 14).

How can rhythm be achieved in house furnishing and decoration? The rhythm of the patterns of the hangings and the pictures is that of the designer and painter, but there can be rhythm in the grouping and arrangement. An



arched chimney piece for example sets the eye looking subconsciously for other curved forms, and a curved frame or even a clock satisfies the craving. In the furniture of all periods we see an attempt to meet the demands of rhythm. The chair seen in Fig. 15 with its harmonious lines is a good example of rhythmical form.

People often spoil a room when they suppose themselves arranging it with due regard to rhythm. They try to relate the sides of the room by cutting off the corners with pieces of furniture. Here they come up against the great principle of building, the right-angle, which, since man sawed off the first branch, has been the essential construction, both for wood and stone. In these attempts to obviate formality, a room may look the reverse of restful; carpet and table set aslant, pictures running up and down the walls, wall papers with slanting lines; there may be a rhythm of oblique lines, but it clashes with the rectangularity of the walls and floor (Fig. 16). On the other hand too much may be sacrificed to symmetry. The wall of a room, arranged as if it had been folded over, a table in the middle, a chair on either side and the pictures symmetrically placed, gives an impression of dull formality.

## CONVENTION

How often do we find ornament of the wrong sort, or in the wrong place? If a chair back hurts one's spine because it has been curved and fretted into sharp projections, the work is obviously out of place, but the case is rather different with other forms of wrongly designed ornament such as the naturalistic wall paper or carpet which pretends to be covered with real flowers, or say the flower spray flung across the soup plate. Here is a real difficulty with many sincere people, who say, "We love nature, and living things, for they are beautiful, and it must surely be better to have designs natural rather than conventional." To such folk it seems an impertinence to put down forms different from nature's drawing. The difficulty may be cleared up by abandoning this word "conventional," which is misleading when applied to art. Let us remove the suffix and say that to every form

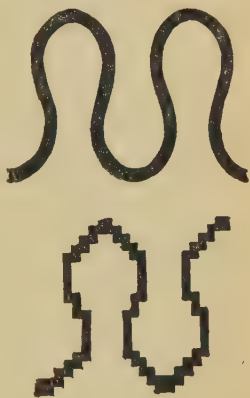


FIG. 17.

of art is linked its own *convention*. Any material which the artist or craftsman uses has its limitations, and these determine how far, if at all, nature is to be followed. Thus the wood-carver knows he cannot imitate the paper-like thinness of leaves; his material will not allow of it, but the movement of line, the variety of surface, and the intricacy of edge which natural foliage displays are qualities which are suitable to wood, and which will come naturally if the gouges are used with the carver's mind behind them. Once in a way, a Grinling Gibbons may pierce and fret his work so that he



FIG. 18.

seems to be competing with Nature, but in spite of its lightness and sparkle we have a suspicion that it is over done, we feel almost sorry for the wood. Naturalistic effect is especially out of place in embroidery, it is evident that the needle *draws* with difficulty compared with a more tractable tool like a pencil, although misguided people may make embroidery pictures. As for a craft like stencil cutting, natural appearance is obviously out of place, for the stencil plate is nothing but a series of holes; these with the spaces between called "ties" form the pattern. The ties should help the design, and not be there merely to hold it together.

In the case of the wall-paper and carpet, any attempt to dissemble their flatness gives a positive feeling of discomfort. One may like to sit outdoors among flowers and foliage, but indoors, solidity and firmness of walls and floor are necessary to our sense of comfort and seclusion;

whatever design is used should emphasise, not contradict flatness. There are two other reasons why the wall-paper pattern should not imitate reality. One is that as the design will be repeated many times, the less assertive the forms the better will they bear repetition. For instance we could hardly imagine such a motive as the human face being repeated ad infinitum. When we do see faces in the fire, or in pattern of hanging or carpet, peering out at us, we know that we have a temperature, and should go to bed at once. The other reason is that wall-paper



FIG. 19.

designs being printed with blocks or rollers, the patches of colour are necessarily *flat*. Naturalistic work means multiplying the printings to obtain shading, whereas the designer should use only as many blocks as he requires to obtain good colour and form. As for the carpet, obviously a level floor is the safest and pleasantest, and to destroy flatness by imitative effect such as realistic roses, brings about an uncomfortable feeling as one walks, a tendency to raise the feet higher or take a longer



FIG. 20. Eros.

step. Again one makes a rug or carpet by tying knots of wool on a warp and cutting off the loose ends; a true curve cannot be made, it proceeds by a series of steps, and small petty forms disappear (Fig. 17). In a word the carpet designer has to regard the limitations of his material, has to evolve a *convention of form suited to it*.



FIG. 21. wood. Even in a "cabriole" leg, some of the

longitudinal fibres are intact throughout the length (Fig. 21). In the mediæval statuettes of the Madonna and Child, in ivory, the figure is inclined so that the child rests on the hip, a quite natural attitude, but one imposed on the carver by the curve of the tusk (Fig. 22).

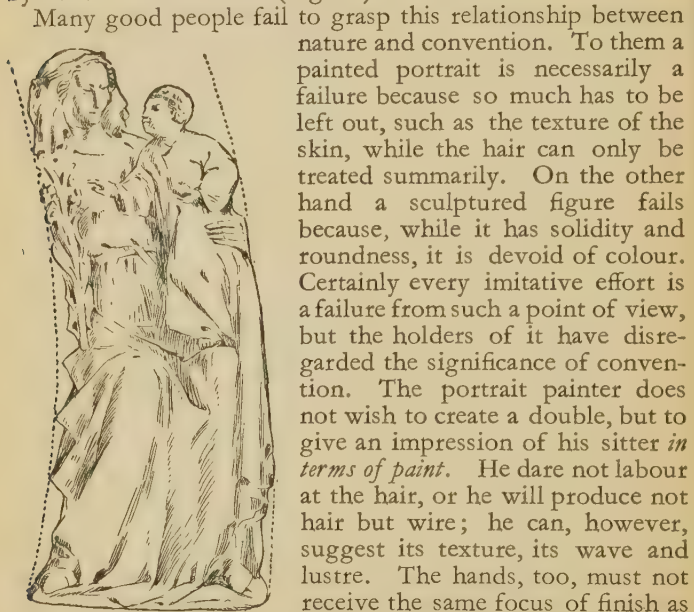


FIG. 22. Ivory.

Many good people fail to grasp this relationship between nature and convention. To them a painted portrait is necessarily a failure because so much has to be left out, such as the texture of the skin, while the hair can only be treated summarily. On the other hand a sculptured figure fails because, while it has solidity and roundness, it is devoid of colour. Certainly every imitative effort is a failure from such a point of view, but the holders of it have disregarded the significance of convention. The portrait painter does not wish to create a double, but to give an impression of his sitter *in terms of paint*. He dare not labour at the hair, or he will produce not hair but wire; he can, however, suggest its texture, its wave and lustre. The hands, too, must not receive the same focus of finish as the face or they will compete with it; the dress has to be summarized for the same reason. The painter, indeed, has to work in a world of his own, a tiny world the size of his canvas. The sculptor makes his impression by quite other means. He works by mass and line. He can imitate the forms and the texture of flesh very closely, but again the hair evades him, he can do less with it than the painter. Even in the self-coloured bronze or marble he can suggest colour by strong accents of dark so that we are not conscious of its absence.

Thus, in every form of art, imitation is subservient to a

purpose, is limited by a convention, which it is artistic death to disregard. The painter produces a beautifully coloured surface which with its frame will enhance a wall, this apart from the expression of his theme or its likeness to nature; the sculptor forms his statue so that it may fill a niche, or take its place nobly as part of an architectural setting or impress by its mass, proportion and line, even if it stands alone, as the Winged Victory did on her rocky islet.



## COLOUR

ONE of the most interesting features of modern taste is a renewed interest in colour. Not so long ago, artistic sensibility hardly admitted bright colour. Whistler, for instance, painted with the quietest of pigments; greys and blacks filled the greater part of his canvases, with the flesh colour as the chief note, or may be the blue of china or the red of a lacquered jar. But before his death, report came of a new school of painting, and although people flocked to the first Post-Impressionist exhibition in London, to deride the pictures of, among others, Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin, yet their colour schemes must have made an impression, for colour began to assert itself in fabrics of all sorts. This was made possible by the experiments of the dyeing industry, which found itself possessed, through scientific research, of the strongest colour in unlimited variety. These dye-colours have gone far beyond the pigments of the painter's palette, the resources of which are limited by the necessity for permanence. At first the dyers did not dare to offer at home their strongest effects, but traded them abroad. The taste of barbaric peoples for bright colours, reacted on our own movement, for some brilliantly dyed stuffs intended for the African market, having been seen in London where they had been used to drape an exhibition room, people fell in love with the strange violet and purple hues and demanded them of the makers.

It is certain that at no previous age were to be obtained hues as brilliant as those of to-day. We think of the middle ages as resembling a bouquet of flowers, but the colours of mediæval dress, beautiful as they were, being derived mainly from vegetable sources would fade into insignificance beside our screaming dyes. This power of colour handed us by the

scientist is not all gain. With him it is not an artistic matter at all, but a question of research. Each time he varies the quantities of his constituents, a new colour or variety of it, appears. This wealth of hues only imposes more responsibility on the buyer. Art manifests itself in the *use* of colour. Every hue is beautiful if we can find its fitting companions, just as every musical note requires its fellows to form a chord.

In the middle ages, to go no further back, the use of colour in dress was not confined to one sex. The puritan idea that preoccupation with beauty was sinful had its effect in dulling for a time the hues of dress, but it was the rising industrial epoch, with its furnaces and smoky chimneys, which strangled colour. When a manufacturer visited his factory, in a sky blue suit with stockings to match, and came out covered with smuts, a change was indicated. For men the dropping from colour to drab has persisted; many men, especially young men, regard colour as something trivial, beneath their attention, and as far as taste in colour is concerned, they are artistically colour-blind. They prefer red because they recognise it with ease, and they like its warmth and assertiveness. In every man-furnished city office, the carpet is red. In an experiment with a mixed class of students taking an elementary course in art, groups of objects, each containing strong notes of colour, were set up round the class-room. The men students repeatedly chose those with red, ignoring the more difficult combinations, to them, of orange, green and purple.

To appreciate colour, it is necessary that the attention be directed to it; the eye must be interested. We will discuss a few experiments and exercises as a preliminary training in colour knowledge. Let us begin by examining the purest and strongest hues as we see them in the rainbow or prism. It will be convenient to use a spectroscope, in which we see the colours in bands surrounded by black or darkness. At one end is violet, a clear, strong colour which has no affinity with red; (that is why, in colour-mixing, the mixture of reds and blue to make violet is always disappointing). Violet makes way for blue, which is quickly followed by green. There seems to be a good breadth of light green or greenish yellow,

but the band of pure yellow is so limited in width that some deny its existence. Orange-yellow follows, giving place to orange and that to ruby, which darkens into black, without, be it noted, any purple. These "spectral" colours are of full strength; our richest dyes can be no stronger and coloured objects are dull by comparison. As a standard of colour, however, it will be well to keep these hues, *and their order*, in mind.

Next we will take a single hue and examine it from three aspects known as the "constants" of colour. First to be noted is the *hue*, whether red, orange, yellow, green, blue or violet. When the colour is strong there is no difficulty in stating the hue, but one has only to look around to see a multitude of colours so subdued, although not necessarily light in tone, that one hardly cares to name them. The second constant of colour may be called its *pitch*, its degree of lightness or darkness. We talk of the high and low keys of the piano, although the keyboard is level. Similarly we may think of light tones of colour as "high" and the dark ones as "low" in pitch.

The third constant is the *strength* or degree of saturation of the colour. Not all boys who like sugar in their tea know that a point can be reached when the liquid will not become sweeter no matter how many more lumps are added, for the solution has become *saturated*. In ordinary surroundings, saturated colours are rare; everywhere we see hues (dark or light in pitch), which have but little strength, are unsaturated with colour. The red, say, of sealing-wax is fully saturated; we may imagine this red, *without changing its pitch*, to lose its strength gradually until it becomes a neutral grey, the opposite of a saturated hue. Therefore to estimate (or describe) a colour correctly, we have to consider it in its three aspects of hue, pitch and strength. (The term "brightness" should not be used in describing colour, as it may cause confusion between strength and pitch.) We may say of the colour of pink blotting paper, that its *hue* is red, its *pitch* fairly high, and its *saturation* weak.

It is interesting to note where the colours come on a scale of light and dark. Fig. 23 represents roughly such a scale with white at the top and black at the bottom. On this

scale, red, say that of a scarlet poppy, comes somewhere near the middle; higher it passes into pink and flesh colour and loses itself in white; below it descends into low toned reds until it disappears in darkness. Yellow is the highest of the hues; even at full strength it is at the top of the scale with a long descent through straw-colour and buffs down to dingy blacks. A glance at a thesaurus, a work possessed by many homes since the cross-word puzzle craze, reveals what a wealth of terms there are for low-toned yellows. Orange comes lower than yellow, with its low tones a little richer. On a perfect orange scale we could match most of the varied tones of human hair; we are all "carrotty" in our degree until our hair turns grey. Violet differs most from yellow in pitch, for it is very low down on the scale, next to black, as we saw in the spectrum, and therefore there is a long range of violets reaching up to white; mauve, puce, heliotrope and lavender are names which attempt to represent the ascent.

Now, bearing in mind the relative pitch of these hues *at their strongest*, let us attempt to see how harmony of colour may be obtained; is it only a question of an eye for colour, or are there any rules? Well, if we can find patent cases of discord, of atrocious colour combinations, they may help us to the principles underlying colour harmony. Every girl knows, and avoids, the classic discord, yellow and pink. Why is this so bad? If we look at the spectrum we note that the "companion" colours are in agreement, are harmonious in combination. Thus red, orange and yellow go well together, and on the other side so do green, blue and violet. If we use such combinations, however, we must see that the

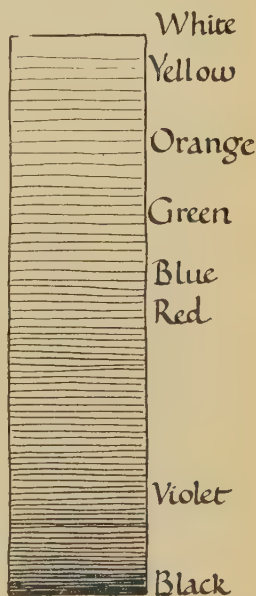


FIG. 23.

colours are kept in their *right order of pitch*, or discord results. Thus to take the case of discord just referred to, yellow is very high in the scale, far above red, and if we place a high-pitched red, that is pink, against the yellow, the latter is too saturated for the former, with the unhappiest effects on both; the yellow becomes heavy and "buttery" the pink sour and tinn. If we lower the pink in the scale, that is to say to crimson, we get a much better effect although we must not expect a complete harmony with two colours, any more than we do with two musical notes sounded together. If other examples of discordant colour are considered, they will generally be found due to a *disorder* in the positions of the colours on the scale of pitch. A strong blue and a pale violet form an unpleasant combination, because violet at its full strength is lower on the scale than blue. If the violet is deepened to its proper place in the scale, the clash disappears. But, as Mr. Barrett Carpenter has pointed out, if a discordant colour be used in *minute* quantities on the other, say particles of pink on vermillion, charming effects may result.

Every one must have noted that certain colours pair. These pairs are red and green, yellow and violet, orange and blue. We will mark off roughly the colours on a circle, so that these pairs appear as opposites or complementaries (Fig. 24). If we look at a bunch of red geraniums blazing in the sun, for say twenty seconds and then avert the gaze to the grass we see a patch of the most brilliant green. The organs in the retina which have to do with the sensation of red, having become fatigued, those in charge of green assume full sway, and for a moment we see absolute green. Evidently here is one way of heightening colour, by contrasting it with its complementary. True, but the usual way, the jester's party coloured doublet and hose, is not the right one, because the areas are equal, and give a jarring effect. Equal quantities of red and green are particularly disagreeable. The correct way of using complementaries is, as before, to oppose a large area of one colour with a *small* quantity or quantities of its opposite.

In the case of a trio of related colours, the effect is bettered by adding their opposing colour, that is one complementary to the average of the three. Thus in a yellow, orange and red

scheme, blue would be required to counteract the warmth and over richness of the combination (Fig. 24). A great part of the painter's secret lies in his quickness to see and make use of complementary hues, enabling him to keep his colour fresh and clean. A class of students was once painting from a model posed against a grey background, her head bound with a bright yellow scarf. The students could not understand why, using the brightest yellows their boxes provided, their renderings of the headdress looked so dull, and the teacher had to point out that the strong yellow of the cap did not allow the eye to see the grey of the background immediately behind the cap; the yellow had turned it violet. One should in a picture, paint a background not as a wall painter would, all the same colour, but with an eye sensitive to the complementaries which change its hue.

Many people still speak of red, blue and yellow as *primary* colours and hence lose the respect of the physicists, who have long discarded those hues as primaries, and have chosen red, violet and green, because, for a working hypothesis of the theory of light, they consider that these answer most closely to primary colours. The non-scientific person may find this choice difficult to understand, for he is more familiar with the mixture of *pigments* than of coloured lights. If the light passing through a glass containing a clear green fluid falls on a red surface, a *yellowish* hue will be seen, where from our experience of mixing red and green *paint*, we should have expected to see a muddy, brownish patch. That is why the scientist calls red and green, primaries; because they produce yellow. One can obtain the same result by spotting dabs of pale red on a grey paper, with an equal number of light green spots alternating with them. From a distance the eye sees the area as a yellowish hue. Similarly violet and green give blue. But we do not, with our colour boxes work in this way; the colour makers have given us very fine

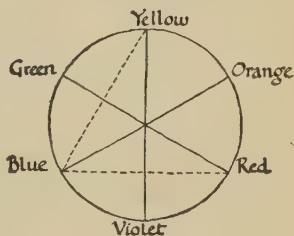


FIG. 24.



yellows, as the cadmiums, and brilliant blues as well. The painter, however, will continue to regard blue and yellow as primaries inasmuch as they make green; but this is owing to their impurity. If we mix prussian blue with gamboge, a rich, juicy green is obtained, because both contain green; the blue is greenish, more so than the other blues and gamboge is a greenish yellow. The blueness neutralizes the yellow, and we see the combined green of the two pigments. When we mix ultramarine with chrome, both fairly free from green, a muddy sage green results, detested by every child artist. If it were possible to get a yellow and a blue pigment quite pure, that is free from green, the mixture would give a neutral *grey*, corresponding to the white obtained by coloured lights.

What is odd, yet easily understood, is the looseness with which we speak of colour. The word "red," for instance connotes at once the vermilion of a Flanders poppy, the crimson of a rose, the pink of blotting paper and the orange brown of robin redbreast, and it is represented in the dictionary of synonyms, by many terms running into half-a-page. Various attempts have been made to standardise the variations of colour, by numbering scales, or by descriptive words which all would accept; but we remain exasperatingly casual in this respect, and systems leave us cold.

Colours have come to be associated with special qualities. Red is combative, exciting, most assertive in its form of scarlet; yellow is associated with light and cheerfulness; blue is cold and serene; green partakes of the warmth of yellow and the quietness of blue; violet is blue passing into shade or distance. But again the modern dyes upset these associations. Blue can be obtained of startling brilliance, while the new purple-violet dyes are so extremely saturated as to make all other hues near them tame and quiet.

Are black and white (and neutral grey) colours? In one sense they must be for the hues around them infuse them with complementaries. White against red looks greenish, and everyone knows the danger of placing green or blue on black, for they may cause it to look faded or rusty. In another sense white and black are the negation of colour, as we saw in the scale of pitch; above, colour disappears at

the level of white light ; below it deepens into black. Mr. C. C. Pearce has pointed out in his book on composition how black, white or grey may be enhanced by placing *complementaries* around them so that they are no longer negative patches, but glow with a strange beauty. They become in such companionship colours themselves. The influence of black and white on colours should be noted. White around blue, for instance, makes it harsh and opaque, while black gives it richness and transparency. People with high complexions are aware of the danger of white, for it coarsens and hardens the flesh colour ; but they can wear black with great effect.

How shall one arrange colour so that it may be harmonious whether in picture, in the home or in dress ? William Morris understood the use of colour rhythm and in his wall hangings and carpets he planned his colour in varying strengths, a method he no doubt discovered in old work. He used, say, small quantities of strong red, and larger areas of duller reds, all acknowledging their kinship to the master hue. He may have done the same with the yellow, but always brought in a colour complementary to the "companion" hues, to act as a foil, giving contrast and vitality. The use of rhythmic colour is clearly seen in a well-arranged room. The strongest note of colour may be that of a vase or a picture, to which the more muted tones of hangings, rugs, furniture and wall-paper are subordinated, all bound together in a subtle harmony.

## HOUSES

ARCHITECTURE is the chief among the arts, and it is important to have right notions concerning it. Great buildings are the most impressive of works of art, and they include all the arts, sculpture, painting, metal work and other crafts. Students working at the decorative arts will not be sure of themselves unless they understand something of architecture, to which their own crafts are necessarily related. We might say "no home, no art," for where the climate is kind enough to allow people to exist without shelter we find but little art, as in the case of the Australian black fellow, who puts up a screen of brush-wood to windward, having no more idea of home than that. Where the weather necessitates more shelter, if only a cave or a tent, the arts start into life. The wigwam is a surface on which charms and deities can be painted. Pottery and weaving appear, and with them the decorative element we call ornament. A step has been taken towards the home.

The history of architecture, however, is not necessarily the history of the home. If we drew up a series of *dwellings*, from the first mud hut to a fine house in Park Lane, we should omit the finest examples of architecture, for these are due to a higher impulse than the desire for shelter and comfort. To the ancient Egyptians "home" had a threefold meaning; there was the home of the god, the home of the dead and the home of the living. The first and second absorbed most of the people's interest and energy. The homes for the living, of sun-dried brick, have fallen back into the clay they were made from, but the Egyptian temples and tombs still stand firmly, because built of enduring materials, such as stone and granite necessary for the use of the gods. The "foreign" stones of Stonehenge came from as far away as Pembrokeshire

brought by a people content to dwell in the simplest of huts. So we may start by asking ourselves what architecture consists in, not mere building, so much wall surface, with



FIG. 25. An ark-like tomb.

openings for entrance and light, and a lid on top for a roof, but with some feeling or emotion in the impulse which brought the work into existence.

Architecture, then has its roots in the past ; the very word takes us a long way back, for "tekton," a carpenter, points to a time when buildings were of wood, and to a district

where there were forest trees, a district such as the pre-Greek tribes inhabited before they came south. At Olympia, in Greece, the columns of the temple of Hera were of varying sizes, as if the stone shafts replaced wooden ones as these decayed. Indeed, architecture always betrays the ingrained

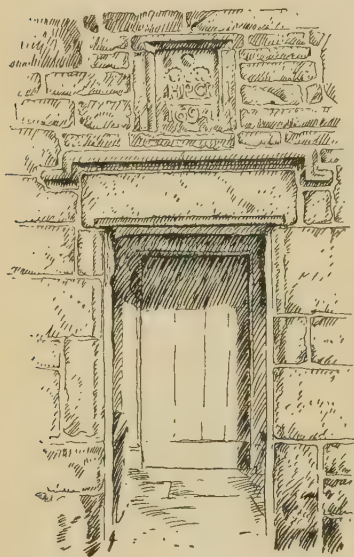


FIG. 26. A stone lintel.

conservatism of man. When using a new material, he clings to the earlier form as if loth to part with it, or perhaps because he cannot visualise his new material in a new form. Many of us can recollect the first motor cars, just like horse-drawn carriages minus the shafts. In the British Museum are two stone tombs from Lycia obviously imitating a wooden ark which could be carried on poles (Fig. 25). In building, the change from wood to stone was more than the substitution of one material for another. Wood is strong by reason of the toughness of its long interwoven fibres; compared with it the hardest stone is brittle.

Hence the pillars of stone cannot support a long lintel, and we find the stone columns of ancient temples close together, in Egyptian work very close indeed. This beam and lintel construction is used in all countries where stone is abundant; in the west of England stone lintels form the heads of the openings (Fig. 26). As we come eastwards and stone becomes scarcer so that hedges replace the rough stone walls around the fields we note that the houses are of brick; the subsoil is now clay. Here we come upon another method of roofing openings—the arch—a means of giving strength with small materials. We may examine the brick house in which we

may find ourselves and fail to find any arches, but, unless stone lintels are used, the arches are there, only the builders have found that it is not necessary to build curved arches to support the moderate weights of small houses ; the head of the opening may be straight, but formed of wedge-shaped bricks acting as the members or voussoirs of the arch (Fig. 27). These two methods of building, of supporting weight—the beam and lintel and the arch—have been used throughout the ages. In recent years, however, new ways have been invented. The rebuilding of London's main streets begins with a great skeleton of iron beams riveted and braced together, later to be covered with stone, natural or artificial. In New York the "sky-scrapers" are evidence of what can be done by means of steel construction. Unfortunately, the stone covering often bears no relation to the real construction of the building ; the mediæval looking detail of the Tower Bridge from this point of view is a sham, and the classic detail

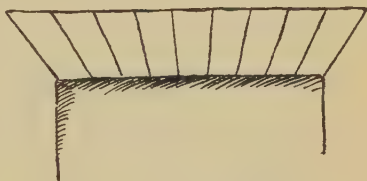


FIG. 27. A "flat" arch.

of our great "emporiums" is in the same class. To some extent this falsity arises from the dual control of the execution of the work ; the engineer puts up the structure and the architect clothes it. Here and there, however, attempts are being made to build honestly with the new materials. In New York where the exigencies of space demand that not an atom of room shall be wasted, the architect leaves these great square structures to tell frankly what they are. He calls it, indeed, "box" building, and by giving attention to the *proportions* of the stages, set back as they are to give light and air to the roadway beneath, the great mass becomes *architecture*, even without a skin of classic columns and mouldings (Plate XIII).

It must not be supposed from what has already been said that architecture takes no note of the home. All the principles of building have to be observed there. The absence of good construction and proportion are as noticeable in a cottage



as in a more pretentious building, and so in our study of architecture we shall do well to begin with our homes and examine them. It has been pointed out elsewhere that every detail in the home speaks of the past. The actual progenitor of our brick or stone houses is a little difficult

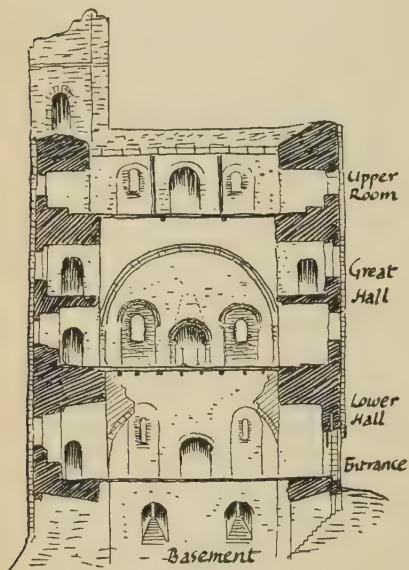


FIG. 28. Section through a Norman Keep.

to find. The Roman houses at Silchester built of brick and with central heating were too advanced in type for the rude Saxon invaders, who were content with more primitive abodes. The Saxon peasant dwellings were conditioned rather by the space required by a yoke of oxen (!), which had to be sheltered inside the home during some part of the year as cattle are in upland Switzerland to this day. The first important English buildings of brick and stone in feudal times were the castles and keeps (Fig. 28). They were not mere forts, but dwellings, and probably thoroughly uncomfortable, because comfort had to be sacrificed to safety. In the basement or great cellar were kept the stores; above was the entrance hall, often approached by an outer stair. This great apartment was ill lit by tiny windows, easily screened and defended. The next two storeys consisted in the great hall, and as this was well off the ground, the windows could be larger. Above this again was the noisy guard room with access to the roof. All these rooms were served by the one circular stair constructed in an angle of

the tower, having to serve for all the inmates, men, women, children and dogs. There was no glass, and therefore no chimneys were needed, for the smoke could leave through the openings, although later, when the hearth was moved from the centre of the room, a kind of chimney was arranged slantingly in the thickness of the wall.

One who tramps the halls and ascends the stair of an ancient keep cannot fail to notice the lack of convenience, of comfort, and especially privacy. There was the small "solar" or lord's retiring room where he could rest in "solitude," a few cupboard like holes in the thickness of the wall for bedrooms, but generally, the inmates, both masters and retainers, lived the whole of their lives, waking and sleeping, practically in public. Our modern home owes its arrangements to an increasing desire, as the periods rolled on, for comfort and privacy. The keep with its storey upon storey cannot, however, have been the prototype of the modern house. For that, one must look at what was itself an evolved type, the fortified manor house of the fourteenth century. In such a place as Haddon Hall, the great hall was the central

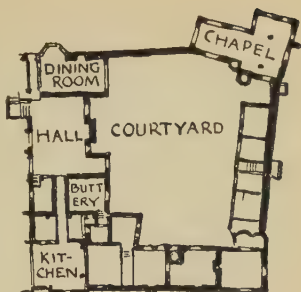


FIG. 29. Haddon Hall.

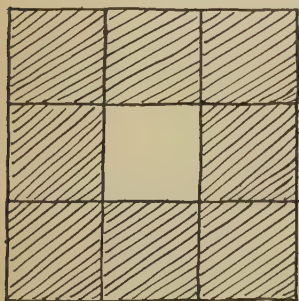


FIG. 30.

and the earliest feature (Fig. 29). There the daily life, the cooking, eating and sleeping went on. Later, kitchen and pantries were added at one end of the hall, and, as the family life began to feel the need for seclusion, a dining room was required, and there seemed nothing else to do but to place it at the other end of the hall, an odd arrangement if meals were wanted hot. Other apartments for the retainers grouped them-

selves round two courts with the hall in the safest place between them, a thick security wall enfolding the whole. This last did not make for privacy, for it followed that the retainers' dwellings had no back doors, the openings looking towards the courtyard, and no doubt people took care to mind their neighbours' business. These tentative dining and living rooms, just mentioned, were looked upon with suspicion by the authorities as likely to be places where conspiracy could be hatched. Kings and queens had reason to be jealous, for long after this period, they themselves lived in public all day, and at night their sleeping arrange-



FIG. 31. A symmetrical country house.

ments were just as devoid of privacy, for they were attended to bed by courtiers, and watched all night by guards.

Most of our great old houses are built on the courtyard plan, the older colleges at Oxford and Cambridge for instance. Even a factory must have its court or well for light and air. If we see a large building with rows of windows on two adjacent sides, we may be sure that there is a court of some sort within. Or to put it another way ; if Fig. 30 represents the plan of a building with three rooms on each side, it is obvious that the central square cannot be a room ; it must represent a space. In other words, no house can be more than two living rooms thick.

The picturesque irregularity of such a place as Stokesay Castle is due of course to the constant alterations and additions extending over centuries, but the type once fixed, the mansion was built as a whole, and therefore attention could be paid to symmetry. After the Civil war when it was

seen that these great Tudor entrance towers and semi-fortified halls could be blown to bits as Old Basing House was, people gave up the idea of living in a fortress. Meanwhile the Renaissance had come in like a flood, and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries covered the land with country houses in the Italian style, with classic facades and great reception rooms; the kitchens and offices were often placed in inconvenient situations, for symmetry was considered all important. One wing might consist of the kitchen and offices, the other the stables, yet both exactly alike (Fig. 31).

Every gentleman was an amateur architect (as the clergyman had been in the preceding age) and extended his attention to the surroundings of the house; he revelled in landscape gardening, levelling hills, making lakes, building balustrades and fountains, and mock ruins. Sometimes he made mistakes in his building; one great house by the Thames has no main staircase, and all the family have to use the back stairs. The pomp and vanity of the eighteenth

century was seen in the great state apartments (auctioneers' advertisements still use the term "reception rooms," as if people spent their lives receiving guests), and, as already mentioned, the working part of the house was relegated to odd corners, very often most inconveniently for the service. For long, anywhere was thought good enough for the servants' quarters, their living rooms being below ground (the area) and sleeping accommodation in the garrets, thereby laying up tribulation for ourselves in these servantless days. Miles



FIG. 32. The Wakes, Selborne.

of this sort of residence are to be seen in the well-to-do parts of west London.

The passion for symmetry has been handed down to our own time with even less regard for convenience. The suburban semi-detached house has the advantage of saving walling and space, and has perhaps more privacy than is possessed by detached dwellings built close together. But when the builder has completed the plan of one half, he folds the paper

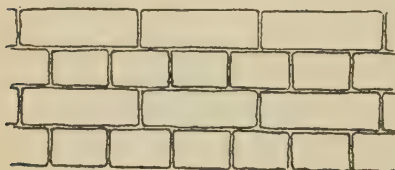


FIG. 33. English Bond.

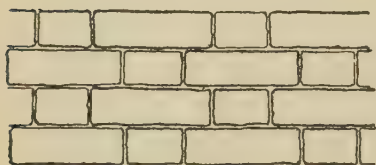


FIG. 34. Flemish Bond.

and traces the lines on the other side, so that the two residences form a perfectly symmetrical plan. This means that if the pantry of one house faces north or east, as it should, then that of the adjacent house will face a warmer quarter and get too much sun. This difficulty is intensified in the streets of the poorer quarters. One side has perhaps all the larders facing north, those of the other side must

therefore all face south!

This terrible uniformity is a matter of thoughtless or heartless mass-production of dwellings; a heritage of that mass of evils, the industrial epoch, which overwhelmed the old craft guilds, the workpeople being crowded near the factories in rows of mean streets, the so called "cottage" tenements.

The above is a brief outline of the descent of the modern house, or rather how its deficiencies may be accounted for. If we intend to build good houses, we must have regard to their surroundings; we cannot design or erect them "in the air," as Kipps and his wife discovered. The house should be in harmony with its environment, built of stone where that is abundant or of brick in a clay district. This rule of building with the materials the locality affords, gener-



ally produces good results. In the villages round the New Forest are to be seen old cottages with walls of rammed earth, irregular and weathered, looking like natural cliffs and beautifully coloured by time. At Selborne in Hampshire under the great chalk "hanger," the houses are of chalk with the angles of the building and sides of the openings of brick for strength. Gilbert White's vicarage was constructed in this way (Fig. 32). In the north, at Ambleside, one may watch a deep hole being dug or blasted in the rock, and of the fragments, a small cottage is built, while the



FIG. 35. A sham ruin.

cavity becomes the cellar, a most economical method of building.

The brickwork of domestic buildings is full of interest for those who care for it. The old English way of building was to put a row of bricks with their ends facing outwards (headers), followed by a double row placed sideways (stretchers) (Fig. 33). The Flemings coming over to teach us their idea of the Renaissance, used headers and stretchers alternately, in the same row, and this method has continued to this day, perhaps because it is more economical, and also because more even and pattern like, but with less variety than the "English bond" (Fig. 34). In Whiteknights Park, at Reading, is a "ruin" of brick of the eighteenth



century landscape-gardening type (Fig. 35). One has only to glance at it to know it for a sham in spite of its mediæval looking window tracery, for the brickwork is "Flemish bond."

In "half-timber" work, such as we see in many old country cottages (Fig. 36), the framing was put up first and the bricks fitted in after; the timber formed the construction, and hence the beams had to be massive. They were un-



FIG. 36. The George Inn, Norton St. Philip, Somerset. Drawn by Maurice B. Adams, F.R.I.B.A.

touched by a plane, being "adzed" to a very pleasant yet somewhat uneven surface suited to the material; prepared so the wood looks strong for its task, and the adze-facets please the eye just as the hammer-marks on silver enrich the surface. The timber-work one sees in gables of new houses is but a sham, a mere surface decoration, and being planed, looks thin and weak. A well-known London firm's great frontage in mediæval style, has great adzed beams mixed with machine-run mouldings, a sad incongruity. This, perhaps in these days, necessary use of the machine has led to a demand for meticulous and mechanical exactness, which

often gives rise to mean forms and surfaces. By this it is not meant that accuracy should be despised; but things should be "finished" in relation to their use. The silversmith of old could have eliminated the hammer-marks on his spoons by continued labour, but having beaten out a true and beautiful shape, he preferred to leave his work at that point.

In these days of dear building, when economy has to be practised, there is one apartment which costs little or nothing, one which stands invitingly open, and that is the garden.

In England there are many days when to be out of doors is pleasant and health giving, and where space is limited, the garden might well be looked upon as an extra room. To do this it must be brought right up to the house. Too often connexion between house and garden is obscured by bushes,

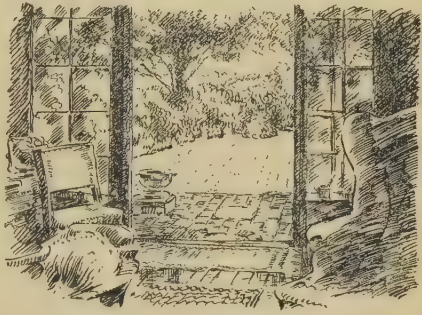


FIG. 37. The "outdoor" room.

flower beds or rockery. If the garden door opens immediately on to grass, and this is carried uninterruptedly some way down, at once a broad green promenade and a spacious apartment is provided (Fig. 37).

A word might be added about tree planting. Too often our gardens, especially in the front of the house, have trees, which, planted as slender saplings gave no warning of the size they meant to attain in the future, and through the annual lopping to prevent the house being smothered by foliage, the unfortunate tree has become a mass of knobs and excrescences reminding us of Mr. Rackham's weird imaginings. Forest trees are bound to give trouble, and are quite out of place in small gardens. The most suitable trees are fruit trees, for they are of moderate size and are decorative both in their spring blossom and autumn crop.

## DECORATION AND FURNITURE

LET us suppose we are going to set up for ourselves in a small house. It may be a new one, in which case, the taste, so far as the shell of the home is concerned, is that of the architect or builder. Nowadays, however, we must take with thankfulness any house of which we can obtain possession. If it is new it will probably be too consciously artistic ; if not, the case will be no better, for everything is sure to be in bad taste. It is true that "graining" is almost dead, but the wall papers will probably be ugly, the light fittings worse and the plaster decorations and tiles worst of all. Even if all is as bad as it can be, moderate determination and a few big brushes and tins of quiet paint, will work wonders.



FIG. 38. Egyptian chair.

The equipment of the modern house tells clearly of the change from early to modern days ; our desire for convenience and comfort has surrounded us with objects unknown to our forefathers. There were, for instance, no coal scuttles in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and but few couches ; the introduction of the latter was exclaimed against as a sign of decadence. Writing bureaux were unknown until a rage for letter writing set in during the eighteenth century. On

the other hand, ancient Egypt had furniture strangely like our own (Fig. 38). Tutankhamen's chairs and cabinets look quite modern, although some of the couches are marked with the forms of protecting animal deities, a symbolism which persists in the lion's claws on the feet of chairs still doing service in our rooms. The Greeks with their reverence for the human figure made the lines of their chairs conform to it as we can see on their vases (Fig. 39). After the fall of the



FIG. 39. A Greek Chair.



FIG. 40.

Roman Empire, and indeed all through the middle ages, furniture lost the subtle curves of the classic period. The mediæval castle with its smoke, draughts of cold air and dirty straw for carpet, had but few types of furniture, such as heavy tables and great chests. Chairs were square framed and straight backed, with a front rail (absent in modern chairs), on which the feet could be raised above draughts or dirt; on old specimens this rail is much worn.

In France, the Italian artists imported by Francis the First, to decorate the palaces, introduced the baroque or swagger style which set its stamp on French art. The familiar candlestick with its "barley sugar" stem is an example of the effort to escape from the stable up-rights and horizontals of classic art (Fig. 40). To-day the last refuge of the style is the theatre with its swirling balconies, spiral columns and looped curtains.

Britain received the new forms late and through Flemish artists, whose pattern books were full of the baroque variety of the Renaissance. Elizabethan furniture exhibits an attempt to emulate the foreign ornate display. The mantelpieces are divided into arches with human bodied terms or pilasters, ornament sprawling everywhere. The

classic capitals were brought in wherever possible and the Italian scrolls and shells fill the odd corners.

During the long reign of Louis XIV, a style evolved which we recognize as *French* although derived from Italian motives, one in which the classic and the baroque merged in a compromise. All the art now centred in the court, which set the fashion in furniture and costume down to the least detail. The vast halls of the palace of Versailles were covered with decorations huge in scale. Gold was plastered on the walls and ceilings as if to emulate the golden house of Nero (only recently excavated), while strong, heavy colouring in hangings and upholstery held its own with the



FIG. 41. Rococo Mirror.

gilding. The idea was to create a "Grand Manner," fitting for a grand monarch, sumptuous and impressive, typified by the rayed sun, a frequent motive (Plate V).

During the following reign, the style called the rococo (referring to the constantly used shell motive) came into being as a reaction from the heavy palace style. Manners and modes at the court had changed, and court favourites succeeded for the first time in making felt the influence of women in matters of apartment arrangement and decoration. Under the régime of Madame Pompadour and other ladies, a style





Louis XIV

Rigaud

*Louvre Paris*



Lange Leizen

Whistler





developed as beautiful and refined in type as the earlier had been extravagant and ostentatious. Decoration and furniture alike were in character with the new apartment—the boudoir or “sulking” room—a name which indicates that the desire for privacy had not yet been accepted generally. Colour reached its highwater mark of refinement, and a free use was made of various coloured woods. Structure and symmetry were abandoned for balance and variety, a change suited to the artificiality of the court, bent on an affected simplicity. In decoration and furniture the straight line disappeared. The scroll, repeated and reversed, formed the frames of mirrors and pictures (Fig. 41). We have come to regard the rococo style, which harmonised perfectly with the charmingly dressed figures of Watteau and Fragonard, as typically French.

These changes of style in France affected other countries. In the time of William and Mary, the Louis Quatorze style appeared in Britain biased by a strong Dutch influence. As their pictures tell us the Dutch were fond of home life. The wagon-loads of furniture and hangings brought over by the new court, and the presence of Dutch designers and craftsmen set their mark on English work. The straight or spiralled legs of chairs of the Stuart period were succeeded by the cabriole or goat's leg, an innovation originally from Italy (Fig. 42). During the reign of Queen Anne, new wants made themselves felt. Writing tables and bureaux were

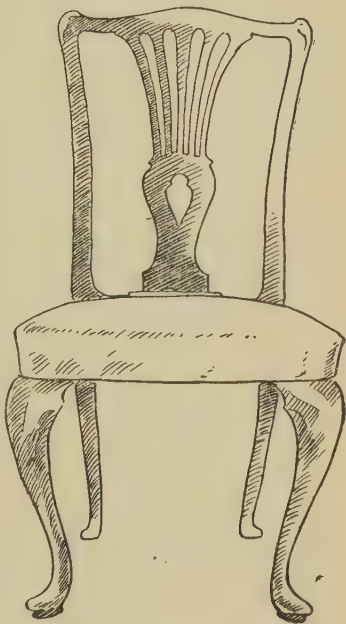


FIG. 42. Chippendale Chair.

wanted, for letter-writing had become a craze ; with them came card and gaming tables. Another fashion was that of decorated needlework ; for the ladies to sit in the withdrawing or " drawing " room, stitching on a frame, was only to follow the example of the queen.

The gorgeousness of the Louis XIV style and the daintiness of the rococo were admired and copied in all the other European countries, but a new material in the hands of a furniture designer named Chippendale gave English furniture a character of its own. This material was mahogany, some logs of which, being tested by workman for rough uses, were pronounced to be too hard for their tools. Chippendale saw its possibilities and it will always be associated with his name, as will also be an article of furniture—the chair—which he fitted to the average human figure in such a way that he may be said to have settled its proportions for all time, although the French chairmakers had already shewn the way. He took the somewhat heavy chair then in use, with its Dutch notion of the baroque, and slanted and widened the seats, fitted the back to the figure and settled the height of the seat by the average human leg (Fig. 42). The hard mahogany led him (in his best work) to a reticence of ornament, of low relief, while the material was found to take a polish impossible to oak or walnut. When he essayed the more advanced rococo, or made experiments in " Gothic " or even Chinese (!) he failed completely.

Although furniture designers were now many, two other names stand out. Hepplewhite emancipated himself from the heaviness of the Queen Anne style. His furniture is light and delicate, especially his chairs of which the backs often exhibit sinuous, shield-like shapes (Fig. 43). Sheraton, an obscure worker during his lifetime, and enjoying little commercial success, began with a love of the severe classic style of Louis Seize. Chippendale had made use of the period of Louis XIV, and Hepplewhite had absorbed the art of Louis XV ; Sheraton saw his opportunity in the style of Louis XVI. His chairs are not so famous as his tables, sideboards and cabinets. He used all the resources of the cabinet-maker's art, and his furniture is enhanced by a variety of woods, inlay and painting, the last a decoration especially

suited to the beautiful lines and simple dignity of his best pieces, which, however, often existed only as designs on paper.

The Adam brothers were mainly architects. They dealt rather with the *fixed* fittings of the room, and in their ceilings staircases and chimney pieces they were influenced by the classic forms newly discovered in the Greco-Roman city of Pompeii.

The eighteenth century cabinet makers achieved such success that it was felt impossible to improve on them, and the impulse having run its course, design and execution deteriorated so that the red-stained mahogany of the Victorian era has become a byword.

To-day people of taste no longer "commission" furniture. They "collect pieces" from various periods, which will go together in style, texture and colour, as we read in the story of "Quinney's," which also informs us of the rogueries of dealing in "antiques." The great furniture making centres of London, High Wycombe and Barnstaple took note of this rage for old work and make "period" furniture, copying the approved styles. Just now the favourite is Jacobean, easy to imitate and florid enough with its turned legs and angular panels to satisfy the popular taste. Among all these highly skilled workmen there is none who can do other than serve up this imitation "period" work, not

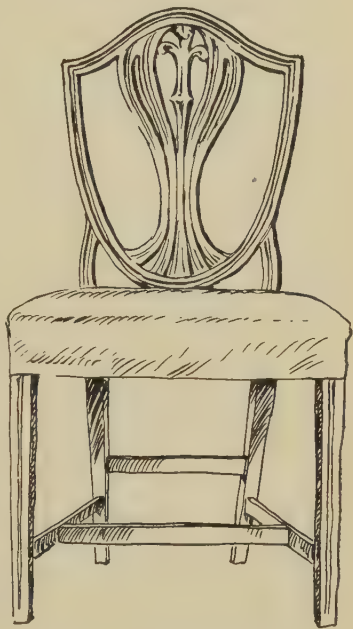


FIG. 43. Hepplewhite Chair.

of course with any intent to deceive. It is as if evolution in furniture design had ceased to operate, as if there were nothing left but skilful workmanship, and even that on not so high a plane as the past, for all the wonderful machines in a modern woodworking factory, these mechanical saws and planes, do not improve workmanship; they only turn out stuff more quickly and easily. The minute division of

labour divorces the workman from design and tends to dull the product.

One man at least found a way out of this blind alley. Ernest W. Gimson, an architect by profession, was staying in a Herefordshire village and, being a lover of good workmanship, was attracted to the workshop of an old chairmaker who followed the ancient traditions and methods of his craft. He used the pole-lathe and the draw-knife, and with these primitive tools he was producing chairs, homely

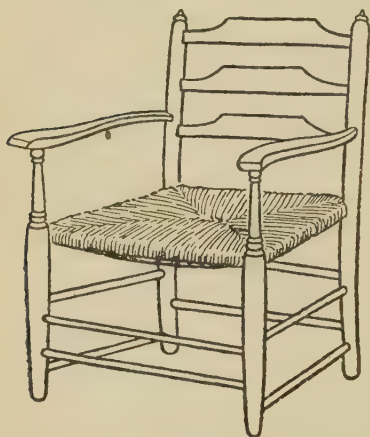


FIG. 44. From a drawing lent by Dryad Handicrafts.

in type, yet comfortable and pleasant to look at (Fig. 44). Gimson set himself to learn, under the craftsman's guidance, to make chairs, and went on to other types of furniture. He was interested in the Arts and Crafts movement, and took his motives from periods earlier than that of Chippendale, so that some of his pieces look almost mediæval. His design, however, was his own and he may be said to form a period in himself. First and foremost he placed impeccable craftsmanship; his work might stand beside that of the great cabinet makers, and not lose by the comparison. He wrought for years with but little encouragement; at the outset he had almost to give his work away, but before his premature death, he could command any price he pleased.

## PICTURES

IN our earliest infancy we were soothed and "kept quiet" with pictures. At first it was immaterial to us which way up they were presented, but soon we learned to distinguish top from bottom and discovered their "looking glass" character. One looks *into* pictures, perceives distance as well as foreground. Pictures exhibit the world as the beholder would like to have it. For children there are pictures of fairies and all sorts of strange happenings, and this love of distraction, of temporary escape from a boring world is just as strong in the adult. Turning over the leaves of a book we look at the pictures whilst carefully avoiding the printed page. To-day, we are surrounded by pictures. In the form of posters they shout at us from the street hoardings. Our books are full of pictures and at home are quantities of photographs, and on the walls, pictures in frames. As to these last, let us consider for a moment why we hang pictures in our houses, why they are considered essential, for many people would refuse to live in a house devoid of them. Of course, in ancient times there were no pictures hung. What pictures people had were painted on the wall or actually formed part of it in the form of mosaic. There were paintings on the walls at Pompeii with painted frames or borders, and surrounded by brilliant decorations. In the middle ages, the pictures were mostly in the churches. Besides mosaic, fresco and stained glass, there might be, behind the altar, a panel, which would correspond more closely to the modern idea of a picture, although a great part of it would be enriched with carving and gilding, with perhaps real jewels set in the crowns and robes. Gradually pictures appeared in the homes. The rich had them in the form of illuminated missals, while even the poor home possessed a rough sheet printed from a wood block and hand-coloured, bought cheaply at the



shrine of some saint, but to-day priceless from its rarity. In east Europe every family had its ikon or sacred picture representing the Virgin and Child, the heads projecting from the surface in relief and adorned with gold and jewels, as much an example of goldsmiths' work as of the painters'.

All this early work, as we have seen, was religious in subject and feeling; but with the Renaissance a breaking away commenced. The portraits of the donors of the altar pieces appeared with their wives and children, in devout attitudes. Later, a panel might be entirely filled by a portrait, but the painting still had to be religious in sentiment; the prince or noble, must kneel, beads in hand, or finger a devotional book (Plate VI). With the slackening of the devout spirit, the painters began to insist on the beauty of the world by introducing landscape backgrounds with incidents, even in altar-pieces and other pictures executed for the church. Finally, the religious motive became perfunctory or relegated to a minor position as in Brueghel's *Crucifixion*, a picture of a crowded village fair with three tiny crosses in the distance.

The Dutch in the seventeenth century, with their love of home and pride in their 'newly-won freedom, abandoned the religious picture, and, frankly pleased with themselves, had their home life painted again and again, varied with drinking scenes (Plate VI). A very slight narrative suffices, as in the subject of the music master who may, perhaps, elope with his pupil. During the succeeding centuries the story interest grew rampant, until nowadays many people refuse to look at a picture without a tale. There might as well be a book on the wall for all the interest they take in the *art* of the picture. A blind man was once seen in a gallery escorted by his attendant. He seemed much interested in what was told him, lingering before some pictures and asking for more details. He could not have enjoyed the pictures themselves, but was concerned only with their subjects. The Pre-Raphaelite romanticists emphasised the tendency to tell a story, sometimes a complex one, and their pictures are often little more than magnificent illustrations (Plate II).

Failing a story, people often put a higher value on some subjects than others. The sea always attracts attention and



Portrait

Hugo van der Goes  
*Royal Museum, Antwerp*



Tavern Scene

P. de Hooch  
*National Gallery*



mountains are more interesting to many than lowland country. Of the pictures by Reynolds and other great portrait painters, portraits of ladies command twice or thrice the price of those of men.

Still there is nothing wrong with people openly avowing their preference, provided it is good of its sort. There are only two sorts of pictures, good and bad. For the artist—the real artist—differs from all other workers inasmuch as he gives more than he is paid for; he puts in something of himself, his feeling for art. The bad picture bears the stamp of a mind incapable of this. The bad painter may be an able technician, but he works with his tongue in his cheek, as if saying: "This is what the public want. This will please them," and we see the results everywhere in such pictures as the *Morning Kiss*; papa and mamma well groomed at breakfast, the child fair-haired and blue-eyed (the children are all blondes in these pictures), the breakfast table with its china and silver, every touch of the brush appealing to a smug satisfaction and pride of possession. Sometimes the bad picture harrows our feelings unnecessarily, as in those of doctors sitting by the bedsides of sick children, every accessory underlined as it were in order to rend our hearts. Or advantage is taken of people's love of sea or mountain, the waves of tin with lather for foam, the crags, heather, bracken, foaming torrent, lordly stag and distant gleam of sun all complete, mere exploiting of a wholesome love of out-of-doors. The bad picture indeed leaves people at their own level, the good reveals unsuspected beauty and truth. Daumier once painted a father and child; the man lifts the little one in a great bear-like hug; but there are no faces to speak of; parental love is conveyed by the *gesture*.

What is meant by composition in pictures? Composition is the means whereby the painter is enabled to direct the eye of the spectator where he wills. Without this controlling power he is hardly an artist. We will examine a few pictures in order to ascertain by what devices the painter achieves his purpose. In the earliest pictures, the characters move across the space as in a procession, or as in a bas-relief such as the Parthenon frieze which is a continuous carved picture, doubtless once coloured as well. Even in the time of Giotto,

the painted picture attempted little more; the characters are all in the foreground, the background or distance being merely indicated to let us know where the action was taking place (Plate VII). Later came the desire to represent depth, distance within the picture as we see it in a mirror, and this was achieved through composition, enabling the painter to obtain grouping and dramatic action in one small rectangle. He abandoned the flat treatment and put one figure behind another to conserve his space. This led to the study of



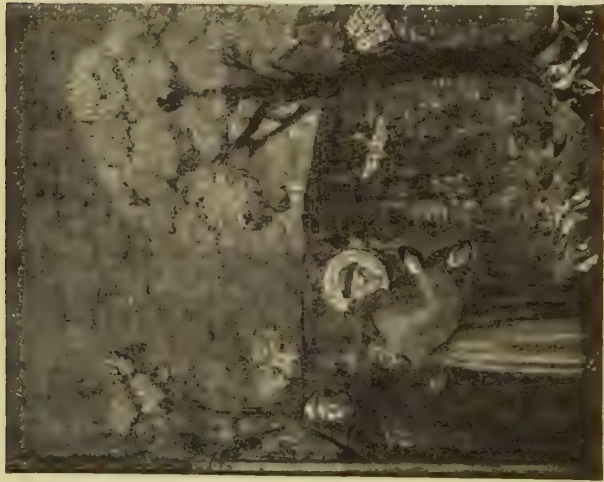
FIG. 45. After J. Maris.

perspective of which an early example is Ucello's battle piece, the spears and dead men being disposed in rows vanishing to the centre of vision, although the action taking place as it does, across the foreground, partakes largely of the earlier style, despite the hilly background.

When once the use of perspective in giving concentration to the composition was grasped, there was no going back to the earlier flat treatment. The most direct example of perspective effect is seen in a straight piece of railway converging to a point on the horizon. The *Windmills* by Jacob Maris, is another instance of this convergence, for the windmills, the canal, and the rafts of timber all give lines leading







St. Francis preaching to the Birds  
*Upper Church of St. Francis, Assisi*

Giotto



Still Life

*S. Courtauld, Esq.*

Cézanne



Lorenzo and Isabella

J. E. Millais

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Dido building Carthage

J. M. W. Turner

*National Gallery*



into the distance (Fig. 45). Painters have used all kinds of devices to lead the eye within the picture, such as a crowd of people, a reef of rocks, a fleet of vessels or even a flight of birds or bank of clouds.

Turner and Claude are always careful to secure this convergence, generally by closing up the sides of the composition. In *Dido building Carthage* the heavy masses of buildings, rocks and foliage block the sides, and compel us



FIG. 46. After J. F. Millet.

to look into the picture (Plate VIII). Sometimes the eye is meant to go in but a little distance, as in an interior. The picture of de Hooch has a heavily barred ceiling and tiled floors taking us right up to the wall, where, finding only a map, we return to the foreground group, the rich reds of the woman's dress and the blue feather, yellow jacket and red scarf of the man holding our attention (Plate VI). In Millais's *Lorenzo and Isabella*, the same device has been made use of, but with a dramatic intention. The eye travels down the table and being brought up short by the blank wall, comes back to the foreground as the painter intended it should, to

dwell on the action of the jealous brother kicking his sister's hound (Plate VIII). Millet's *Wood-sawyers* has much the same planning, for the tree trunk leads the eye towards the forest, and finding there only obscurity, the attention is fastened on the foreground group by the double attraction of strong action and forcible colour; the near man's pantaloons are strong blue and the cut sections of the trunk rich sienna (Fig. 46).

In Millet's *Return of the Worker*, the same method is used,



FIG. 47. After J. F. Millet.

but the line is now *subjective*, drawn by the eye of the spectator, which continues the direction of the outstretched arms to the child and completes the composition (Fig. 47). In Millais' *Christ Wounded in the House of His Parents*, the converging lines are again drawn by the spectator from the eyes of those around the bench to a point in the very forefront of the picture, the wounded hand; that is to say the usual "way in" has been inverted to obtain dramatic effect (Fig. 48).

Again, a good picture should be a decoration; it should have pattern and not be merely a hole in the wall, or even a

window. In Whistler's *At the Piano*, we note that the upper part is light in tone and the lower dark, that the darks of the player's dress and hair break into the light area, whereas the light figure of the child opens up the dark foreground. If we looked at the picture from a distance we should see it something like Fig. 49, the light area of much the same size and shape as the dark. This is called "counterchange" and is a device used in heraldry, giving to a simple motive added variety and sparkle (Fig. 50). If we repeated and reversed the picture several times we should arrive at a repeatin



FIG. 48. After J. E. Millais.

counterchange border pattern (Fig. 49). Whistler was led to emphasize pattern in his pictures through his study of Japanese art, which relied largely on rhythm and pattern of light and dark. Pictures not so consciously patterned, however, as Corot's *Goatherd* will be found on analysis to reveal the effect of counterchange (Figs. 51 and 52). The picture divides diagonally into light and dark. If we repeat the analysis as before we obtain one of the earliest and most popular of counterchange borders, the chevron or zigzag. We can make our pattern more elaborate by noting that the dark obtrudes into the light area and vice-versa. In Holman





FIG. 49. Counterchange.

Hunt's *Shadow of Death*, counterchange has been used to serve symbolism (Plate II). The figure of the Carpenter stretching himself at the end of his day's toil, in the low rays of the westering sun, casts a shadow on the wall, the significant shape of which arrests his mother's glance.

Nowadays everyone is conscious of the difference between a picture and a pattern, although it would be hard to define the distinction, nor did the old workers make such a clear division. Many patterns are almost pictures; there may be lions, or birds, pomegranates, pineapples or only flowers and leaves, but all easily recognised in the pattern. It is not always easy to discern the pattern in the picture, but the work will



FIG. 50.

be the poorer for lack of it. Some of the Victorian painters, wholly engrossed in rendering nature, gave little thought to the patterns in their pictures, but the new movement in painting, which we call Post-Impressionism, rests largely on the recovered interest in pattern, although allied with an emphasis on solidity and volume.

Rhythm has been referred to elsewhere. It is the underlying principle in all art, it binds the composition together, unifying the various items of the subject. The earlier painter's idea of rhythm consisted in sinuous curves interlacing and combining. We see, that in the circular picture of the Virgin and Child by Raphael (Plate IX), these curves bind the whole together and harmonize it with the circular frame. The high lights on the chair should be noted;



FIG. 51. After Corot.

they form the only straight line in the picture and prevent the rhythm from being too sweet and cloying. Another circular picture, by Romney, is rhythmical even in the brush strokes; the round demure face, the rounded curls of the wig, the curves of the body, all harmonize with the outer circle. One sharp square note, the waist-buckle, gives just that snap which obviates tameness. (Plate IX). The *Damozel* by Rosetti again is full of rhythm; the great curve of the head has been repeated everywhere, in the features, hair and shoulders. The little pointed stars form a foil, giving sufficient contrast to satisfy the eye (Plate X).

In the picture by Whistler, the *Lange Leizen*, rhythm has been used to perpetrate a pictorial pun (Plate V). These



FIG. 52. Counterchange.

tall blue-patterned vases, which dealers called familiarly "long Lizzies," are repeated by the young girl in her blue-bedecked kimono; she is a long Lizzy herself!

Pictures of whatever ages and schools conform to certain rules of composition. The artist knows that he must avoid lines leading to the corners of his picture, like the fractures of a pane of glass, and that he must not place figures or other forms centrally, or in a landscape have the horizon half-way up. These and many other elementary rules must be, and are observed by painters, no matter how modern their outlook. This outlook need not disconcert the beholder, for the history of the new movement in painting is short and the strands fairly easy to disentangle. All periods of art tend to become formal, academic, professional, in a word, dull. It was so in ancient Egypt after the brilliant portrait art of the Old Kingdom; in Greece long years of sculpture followed on the art of Phidias, but in spite of the energetic





Madonna and Child

*Pitti Palace, Florence*

Raphael



Portrait

*National Gallery*

Romney



The Blessed Damozel

*Tate Gallery*

Rossetti





action the later sculptors display or the suave texture of the surface modelling, there was a tendency to become academic.

After the great period of Italian art, the painters, in trying to combine the qualities of Raphael and Michael Angelo became mannered. The painting of Barbizon, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Impressionist movement are instances of protest against modern academism. So it has been down to our own time, and the new movements by whatever names they are called are but the latest phases of a struggle in art, which has taken place at intervals throughout its history.

## ART IN SCHOOL

IN the pages of Jane Austen we occasionally find young ladies varying their practice in music or their needlework with sketching in water colours. The eighteenth century drawing master followed the seventeenth century music teacher. Drawing had become an accomplishment and took its place (as an extra) in the curriculum of the schools for young ladies. Drawing as a regular school subject dates from the rise of "Science and Art," an outcome of the exhibition of '51, being introduced into elementary schools as an art-technical (!) subject; model drawing to train the eye in "correct" vision, freehand for the æsthetic side were the chief divisions. The teaching, was of course, subjected to an annual examination. When this was abolished and teachers became free to try other systems of teaching drawing, the publishers stepped in with "charts" to place before the class, a form of instruction dreadfully easy to handle. Then came brush drawing with its blobs, strokes and washes, letting daylight into the old hard line system, and although for a time a dry rot set in (save the mark), yet the freedom and pliancy of the medium eventually dissipated this. Long before they had been used in school, paint boxes had been the playthings of the children, and teachers found that if their pupils were given their heads, they could cause things to appear on the paper, things which made havoc of the symmetrical and carefully planned syllabus, and caused their instructors to experience at once dismay and delight. It was found that although children take pleasure in a drawing lesson from objects (much more than their teachers for reasons into which it is unnecessary to inquire), because any drawing practice is an activity, yet when they were given latitude to evolve their own compositions, their interest amounted to

a passion; disciplinary methods were not required, for absorbed in their self-imposed tasks, the pupils required no keeping in order.

As already hinted, drawing plays havoc with a syllabus. In art there is and can be no clear cut course progressing from the easy to the difficult. Everything is difficult or easy according to the outlook and ability of the pupil. The small boy of five being interested in engines (what did he draw before Stephenson's Rocket tore along with a horseman in front?) draws them in some detail and often very creditably. On the other hand the teacher of object drawing looking round for something "easy," generally lights on a vase or jar. Now the cylinder, of which these are types, if it is to be drawn "correctly," involves ideas very difficult for the unsophisticated mind to grasp. No artists, however gifted, managed to draw their cylinders in "correct perspective" until the science was worked out in the Renaissance; Egyptian, Greek, Chinese and Japanese, to mention a few gifted races, all failed completely in representing circles "in perspective." The presumption is, that as much of the world's greatest art was achieved by these peoples, this ignorance of perspective is no very serious matter.

Many who should know better have looked rather scornfully at what is called expression drawing. They point at Perseus in modern uniform with Sam Brown belt, ignoring similar anachronisms in great works of art. Rembrandt, the greatest of illustrators of the Bible, always portrayed the Jews as he actually knew them and saw them from his window in Amsterdam, in the dress of his period, swarming in the street as they do to this day.

A more serious accusation is that "nothing happens" in this work; the child neither records natural fact nor does it trouble to acquire knowledge. But it is easy to see that imagination has a powerful effect on mental growth. In a very real sense the child becomes a creator, by producing original work. The young artist conceives a theme or has one suggested to it. The subject takes shape on the paper; the young artist using the forms stored in the visual memory, colours them with traditional hues—brown for ground and tree trunks, blue for sea and river, green for grass and

foliage, in exactly the same spirit as Giotto or any other primitive artist.

This act of creation enables the child to see value and meaning in its life. It knows and finds itself in such occupation. We see the same thing happen in the written word. Schools are finding out that they possess orators, poets and writers, and see to it that these are encouraged. Just as art flowered more freely among the early peoples than in later civilizations, so the impulse towards art, unless repressed, seems to be a spontaneous activity with the child.

Of the many earnest teachers who have given opportunities for this self expression, two may be mentioned here. Professor Cizek of Vienna had been working with children for years before Mr. Hawker induced him to send to England specimens of his pupils' work, work which many refused to believe could have been done by artists of such tender years. It must be remembered however, that the artisans of Vienna are among the most skilled in the world, especially in the crafts of book making and the reproduction of illustrations. On questioning a child, above the rest of the class in artistic ability, it will generally be found that one of its parents has artistic leanings or is engaged in some skilled occupation. Cizek begins with coloured paper and a pair of scissors, aware of the snares of the water colour box for very young children. The patterns and themes increase in intricacy so that some critics denied that children could accomplish such work, not knowing that paper cutting in Vienna is a traditional craft and one with which the children would come in contact.

An early exercise was the Christmas tree, and here we see the artfulness (in a good sense), the directive power of the teacher. The Christmas rite is a real passion with the young, and their cut-out paper pictures presented the tree glowing with lights, laden with toys and set off with gay curtains. In some exercises the treatment rises to the transcendental; the tree becomes a part of fairyland with stars in the background. One feels the intensity with which these children worked, the passion with which they toiled to express their vision. Prof. Cizek is quite clear as to his aim. His is not a drawing class. He does not look upon himself as a

teacher of drawing, to criticize and correct ; he takes all who come, assuming they are artists ; he gives them places in his class-room, finds materials for them, paint and paper, wood for the toys, gay wools for embroidery, wood or linoleum and knives for the block printing, and sets his young friends to work. He declares that the drawing lesson taken in the ordinary schools does not allow sufficient outlet for the desire for artistic expression which he is sure exists in the child, and claims little more than that he provides opportunity for young artists to prove themselves such.

He does not even claim that he is developing the child, and says frankly that after a time things go wrong. When the age of fourteen or fifteen is reached the child becomes a " young person," enters a new world of ideas, and leaves for ever the enchanted land in which it has been playing. Even so, it is impossible to believe that the mind of the child has not been impressed by the work it has produced, in many cases obviously with strong conviction.

Miss Richardson, whose work at the Dudley High School for Girls, and elsewhere, is well known, takes a somewhat different line of approach, although the results tally with those of the Austrian children. She tries to gain the confidence of her pupils, to convince them of their power to express themselves pictorially. She rejects the snippets produced in the ordinary drawing lesson, the jug, box, and succession of poorly shaped objects the class room affords, and the meagre spray of flowers timidly drawn and coloured ; she asks of her pupils that they shall draw and colour something that comes into their minds, not necessarily an object, or even a pattern. What forms and colours the children see with closed eyes are to be set down on paper, and the results are often strange and somewhat inchoate, being perhaps merely the effect of light on the blood vessels of the retina, but it matters not ; the plunge has been made, and the pupils begin to find their feet. The compositions reveal clearly that the teacher is working hard, not so much work of directing, advising, criticising, as of a more indirect character, none the less hard for that. She evidently sees that her pupils are amply supplied with materials. From a water-colour box, certain pigments, especially the yellows, always disappear



first, resulting in poor colour and worn out brushes. Even advanced pupils often seem quite indifferent to the condition of their water colours and of their brushes. A professional painter working continuously will wear out a sable brush in less than a month; it can still be used for some purposes, but its lost point forbids its being used for drawing of a keen and searching sort. This care for materials may seem pedestrian, but it is a fact that in the art class-room the teacher has to come down from rostrum or pedestal, has to haul with the crew, or rather act as an elder brother or sister.

A set of exercises Miss Richardson's pupils did on one occasion reveals another aspect of her teaching. She had seen the Russian ballet several times, and described it to her pupils. She must have impressed them deeply, for after suggesting the ballet as a subject for illustration, the result revealed the interest with which the pupils had listened, and the teachers' evident gift for painting word pictures. The drawings were larger than usual; such a fine subject demanded ample space. The compositions varied in regard to the action, but they all depicted a stage with resplendent hangings and scenery; they were all different yet all alike in the response they made to their teacher's suggestions. In some the scenery was the chief motive, in others the rhythmical movements of the actors, or the changing effects of coloured lights; in nearly all the exercises the vitality and vivacity of the work were such as to suggest that the artists were working from actual visual experience.

How far does this expression drawing compare with other subjects in its contribution to a logical and symmetrical educational course? Drawing, with the rest of the curriculum, aims at assisting children to grow up, in full possession of their faculties, with balanced minds. The old view of drawing was that it should develop observation and a sense of proportion; even neatness was often insisted upon as especially to be developed through the drawing lesson. This, however, only reduces drawing to the level of the other subjects without making use of its special province. Drawing is a language. It is often easier to draw an object than to describe it. One may reasonably then require that first and foremost some practice in drawing objects, not

necessarily in correct perspective, should take first place. The traveller in a foreign inn who wanted mushrooms for breakfast, and not knowing the word, seized a piece of charred wood from the hearth, and sketched the outline of a mushroom on the plaster wall, would not have been rewarded with an umbrella if he had been able to draw better, that is, had known what a mushroom looked like. It will be noted that all this "language" drawing is from memory, and that is where the expression drawing is most effective. The child forgets its self-consciousness and puts down all the more firmly on the paper the representation of the image, because that image engrosses its attention. It comes to this then that all the special advantages supplied by the drawing lesson are fostered by expression work. Perspective and light and shade are wanted only by professional draughtsmen; colour is wanted by all during our lifetime, and so is imagination and power of visualising. Of course, nothing written here, detracts in the slightest from the importance of drawing as a discipline, or as a preparation for life's work. The greater number of our children will spend their lives in "making things," and it is important that they should be able to draw simply and directly, the objects with which their working hours will be concerned. They should be taught to visualise, to form mental pictures of the constructions they are likely to meet with, and not merely be allowed to leave them in the abstract forms of plan and elevation. Drawing of this sort is a real force, a direct development of the worker's powers.

Coming next to the related subject of "hand-work," from the point of view of "appreciation" it can hardly be said that in the past "manual training" has fulfilled its purpose. The great activity in hand-work has outstripped its proper aims. Cutting and sewing leather badly and ornamenting it with two leaves and a cherry will not give either an insight into craftsmanship or appreciation of what is fitting. The woodwork may insist on impeccable workmanship, yet the poor proportions and shapes of its models, may betray that it has never got into touch with the fine wood-work of the best periods. A boy may not be able to make a cabinet, but inspection of a good piece of work may stimulate him

so to arrange the lines of a simple bracket as to make clear that he has learned to appreciate the essentials of good wood-work craft. Much the same might be said of metal work. Our centres equipped with power lathes and various labour-saving plant look imposing, but it should be remembered that of all crafts metal-work depends least on multiplicity of equipment. Some of the finest metal-work, that of the bronze and early iron age, was made by men working with a few primitive tools, hammers, anvil and punches. Modern machinery does the work more quickly, and can deal with greater mass, but does not necessarily improve execution. When in such well-equipped training centres as have been referred to, only meanly shaped and commonplace objects are all that can be turned out, something is lacking, and that the appreciation of fine form. What is the use of making a poorly proportioned tin mug, when the same expenditure of effort might produce a well shaped object which may be the stepping stone to even finer things? Of course if the centre is situated in an industrial district where engineering is carried on, it should be well equipped, and exercises devised to develop scientific exactness and intellectual resource, but even here it is well for the pupil to work some exercises with the simplest of tools, starting at the rock-bottom of the craft.

Again if we examine such a course as that usually arranged for apprentices in the building trade, we find the emphasis entirely on the technical side. The building construction, mechanics, geometrical drawing are all severely "practical," and we see the result in the ugly houses around us. The students are taught every kind of practicality; only the enormously practical idea of appreciation is neglected. The course seems expressly designed to put out of sight every allusion to art. In "practical geometry" (to call it by its new name) for example, a study which lies at the basis of design, the course is confined severely to the technical constructions which may crop up in the day's work, while exercises involving appreciation of shape and pattern are, perforce, omitted.





A dying Bison

Cave of Altamira



Cave Painting of a Reindeer

## THE PATH OF ART

LET us try, in a few pages, to trace the path of art from the earliest times, indicating the great achievements, the finest periods. We shall find the path going over hills and through valleys, sometimes rising to great heights, and again almost disappearing in the low-lying places. It begins a long way back, for even early man had art. The great hand-axe of Chelles exhibits a feeling for form and symmetry, which lies at the base of all art. In the later periods, the flaking becomes more skilful; the leaf-shaped blade of Solutré, with its delicacy of outline and retouching, tells us that man was then as clever with his fingers as he has been since (Fig. 53). The paintings of animals on the walls of the caves of France and Spain reveal another aspect of his feeling for form. The creatures depicted are life-like in their proportions and movement (Plate XI). Executed entirely from memory as it must have been, the work comes from man's power of "seeing things." The engravings on bone and the sculpture in ivory tell the same story. That is to say, by reason of his sense of form, his inward vision or imagination and his skill of hand, early man was an artist.



FIG. 53.

Before the art of the Magdalenians had faded away, in Crete, Egypt and West Asia, people were living who no longer depended on the chase for a livelihood. They practised agriculture, and could make pottery, and weave cloth. They lived in communities and worked for common ends, such as digging canals for irrigation or throwing up ramparts for defence. They were so busy, however, with their



industries, that they had forgotten, if they ever knew, how to draw, paint, carve or model natural forms. They had *arts* and ornament, but little or no power of representation. In Sumeria at the mouths of the Euphrates and Tigris this busy stone-using, tribal life seems to have developed very early into a great civilisation. It is in Egypt, however, that we can trace the stages most clearly. The advance, and it seems to have been a rapid one, was due to several causes of which the strongest was an impulse, felt not only in Egypt, but at varying times and in varying degrees of strength right round the world. This impulse was the extraordinary development of the care for the dead.



FIG. 54. Tomb statue.

Even the cave-man believed in a future life, for he painted the corpse and set a flint tool by its hand. In Egypt, prosperous like Sumeria, because of careful irrigation and tillage on a grand scale, there developed a marvellous growth of funerary ritual and art, resulting in the mightiest building the world has known, in the form of tombs of which the Great Pyramid is the chief example. Besides building, the crafts of weaving, metal-work and jewellery, carving, sculpture and painting developed in an amazing way, owing to the requirements of the priestly undertakers. The portrait statues of the Old Kingdom, made only to do duty for the dead in the darkness of the tomb almost challenge life itself (Fig. 54). After a period of decline due to civil war, the Middle Kingdom arose, no longer looking at nature, but copying the earlier art, a period brilliant in craftsmanship and especially to be remembered for its superb jewellery. Later came another time of trouble, caused by invasion, and the arts decayed. When the land was cleared at last of the usurpers in 1850 B.C. (the earliest date in Egyptian history, upon which archæologists are agreed), the New Kingdom or Empire was established. Its art was just as dependent on the past as the Middle Kingdom had been, but through its victories in Asia it acquired a prodigious amount of "power," the muscles of hordes of captives. The

treasures of the world were poured into Thebes during the XVIIIth dynasty, and the ostentatious use made of it is seen in the gold coffin of Tutankhamen and the gilded shrines which enclosed it. A little earlier, the ideals of the heretic king Akenhaten had caused, for a brief period, a return to nature, well seen in the vivid portrait bust of his wife. During the later dynasties the old rites supplied no new impulse, and art was reduced to copying the style of the Old Kingdom,



FIG. 55. Chase of the wild horse.

a kind of renaissance, which however was sterile and led only to decay.

In Sumeria, the "land of the two rivers," conditions were different. There, as in Egypt, irrigation was practised on a large scale, but as much in controlling, as extending the area of the inundation, for the flood-water came down more rapidly than on the Nile, and was destructive. So palaces and temples were built on great platforms of sun-dried brick. The Egyptians had close at hand quantities of good stone and hard rock, and their temples and mighty statues still stand; the Sumerians and Babylonians living on a wide district of alluvial soil, could not obtain stone easily, and their statues are few and ill-proportioned (Fig. 10). As for their



FIG. 56.

and the cruelties they inflicted on their helpless victims, have come down to us, with their five-legged monsters guarding the portals of their palaces. Assyrian art is marred by its harshness and cruel spirit, but the hunted animals on the reliefs are as life-like as those of the cave art (Fig. 55).

The hated Assyrian rule overthrown, the Babylonians rebuilt their great city with renewed splendour. Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon became one of the "Wonders of the World," although unlike the first wonder, the Great Pyramid, which still stands much as when erected, the "great city" has returned to dust with only a shapeless mound marking where its high temple once stood. The Babylonians, keen traders, as they were, of their woven fabrics, influenced the Greeks, who took the rosettes and "trees of life" (Fig. 56) patterned on the rugs, and used these motives in their own ornament (Fig. 57).

Babylonia, with other nations, was conquered by the Persians, who absorbed the arts of their subjects. They mingled Egyptian, Babylonian and Greek motives in the strange capitals of the columns of the halls of Persepolis (Fig. 58). The Persian rule, however, rapidly as it extended, and brilliant as were its conquests,

great temples and palaces, these, with the platforms themselves, have weathered down into their original substance, and have become shapeless mounds. Later, the fierce Assyrians took over the arts of the peoples they conquered; their palaces, too, have crumbled away; but the slabs of alabaster which lined their halls, and on which were depicted the exploits of their rulers in war and the chase,



FIG. 57.

never evolved a style in art. It was the art of little Greece (who kept back Persia from entering Europe) which has dominated the world's taste down to the present day.

We must now go back in time to consider another ancient civilisation with an art quite unlike either that of Babylonia or Egypt, although owing something to both. Its centre was in Crete, where by means of sea power this civilisation extended its influence, and perhaps its rule, far and wide. The excavation of the palace of Knossos, built in part of good stone, has revealed to us its treasures, although damaged or shattered. Its fine "egg-shell" pottery was much sought after by Egypt of the Middle Kingdom. Its chief claims to our attention, however, lie in the naturalism of its art. The Cretans loved nature, and animals, flowers, and sea creatures cling round their vases, or are depicted on the walls of the palaces (Fig. 59). Hundreds of years before the Greek nation existed, this lively, brilliant Cretan art came to a sudden end. Knossos was destroyed about 1400 B.C., and never regained its power and prosperity. Ægean art was continued by Mycenæ, where, as in the XVIIIth Dynasty of Egypt, and much about the same time, gold was abundant, and used for ornamental purposes without stint. At Mycenæ, however, the most interesting remains are those of the impressive beehive tombs consisting of finely shaped, subterranean domes, perfected examples of a type of tomb widely spread, from Spain to Syria.

From before 2000 B.C. there had been unrest in Central Asia, perhaps due to the drying up of the interior. The

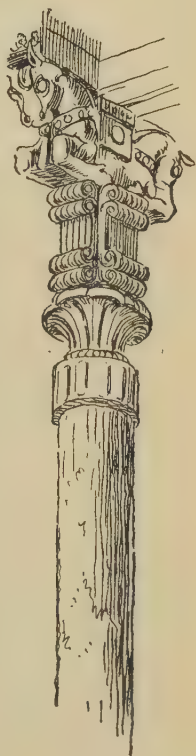


FIG. 58.

nomads moved westwards, setting up movements on the part of the peoples they jostled. Tribes who were to evolve into Greeks, trekked south and occupied Greece and the west coast of Asia Minor. Eventually they destroyed the Cretan civilisation and that of Mycenæ. Ægean art, as a whole, disappeared from sight, not to be recovered until



FIG. 59. Cretan Vase.

recent times. The conquerors, barbarians as they were, once established in their new home, developed a civilisation superior to those which had preceded them and of a very different type, as we can see from their art. By 800 B.C. we recognise an art distinctly Greek, although as yet in its early, archaic stage (Fig. 60).

The Greeks invented little, borrowing their motives, as we have

remarked, from the Babylonians and elsewhere. The Ionic order came from western Asia, the Doric grew from buildings supported by pillars of wood, such as we know the Cretans and Mycenians used (Figs. 61 and 62). What motives they happened on, however, the Greeks improved and refined, so that we can hardly recognise in them the original source. They took the human figure as their standard of beauty, and idealised it in a way impossible to the earlier nations. The Egyptians, obsessed by the monstrous animal forms of their gods had no such standard of human beauty and the same criticism applies to the Assyrians, Babylonians and Sumerians. The Cretans, on the other hand,



although more brilliant than the Greeks, were frivolous in their outlook.

They lacked dignity and depicted the human figure with a waist pinched like that of a wasp (Fig. 9). The Greeks alone understood proportion and developed it in their art by their study of the human figure (Fig. 63). They learned to represent a god-like person, with free movement, unlike the immobile Egyptian and Assyrian figures, meant to be looked at from front and side only.

After the defeat of the Persians, Pericles secured that the contributions of the Greek cities towards a fund for safe-guarding themselves against future invasion should be sent to Athens, and mortgaged the treasure in the adornment of that city. It was a moment when great wealth, superb skill, learned direction and refined taste all met, a conjunction never before or after experienced, the supreme effort in the history of art, from which resulted the noble Parthenon and its sculptured adornment, the work of Phidias and his artists. The later Greek art, although it did not fall away into mere



FIG. 60.



FIG. 61. Ionic Capital.

copying as in Egypt and Babylonia, yet became self-conscious. It grew learned and academic. There is much clever anatomical rendering and surface finish. Figures are represented in violent movement, with outstretched limbs as if to hide the sculptors' lack of vital stimulus. Finally Greece and her art was swallowed up, absorbed in the Roman Empire.

Ancient Greece must not be



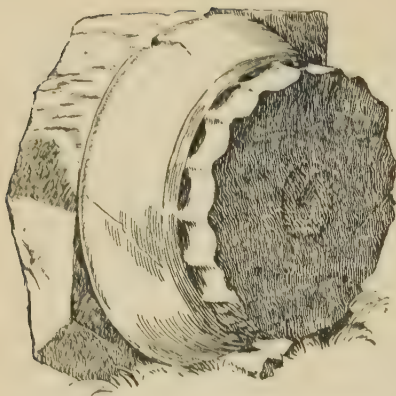


FIG. 62. Doric Capital from the Parthenon.

thought of as occupying only the little mainland peninsula. It established colonies far and wide in the Mediterranean, of which that of Southern Italy called itself Magna Grecia. Greek art, too, influenced a wide area in central and even western Europe. Mycenaean art had affected the metal-work of the Bronze Age. In the beautifully designed curves of the decorated shields of the Early

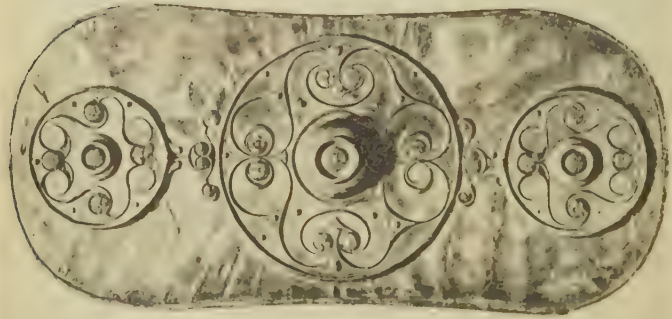
Iron Age in Britain we can see the spirit at least of the Greek scrolls (Plate XII).

Greek art had passed its zenith before Rome absorbed her and her artists. Rome had already destroyed the art of the Etruscans, a people who had learned much from Greece and whose jewellery was remarkable for its minute finish. Later, she annihilated Carthage, the great colony of the Phœnicians, a race of traders and clever craftsmen. Rome's first great works were those of necessity, such as roads, harbours, and aqueducts; with the expansion of the Empire she planted cities far and wide, each a copy of her great capital, using Greek artists to carry out her designs. In every city were temples, forum, basilica and amphitheatre, even in Silchester in far-off Britain. Spain is full of such remains; there are hundreds of forgotten Roman cities on the north coast of Africa, and they are to be found



FIG. 63.

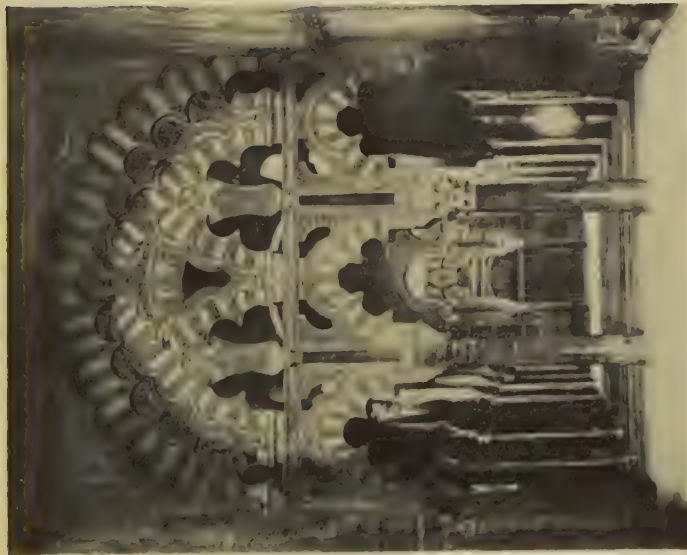




British Shield of the Early Iron Age  
*British Museum*

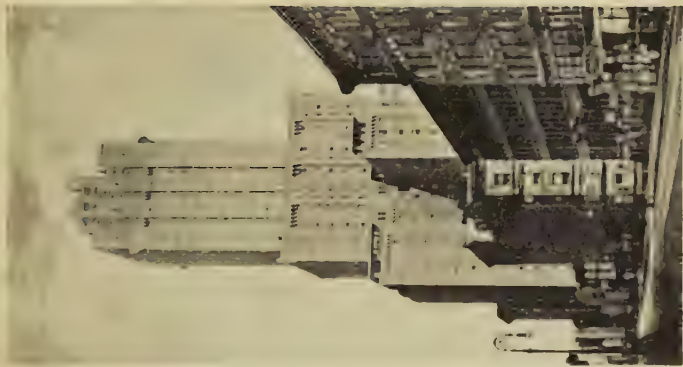


Trajan  
*British Museum*



Cusped Arcading

Cordova



Shelton Hotel, New York

Arthur I. Coomiss Harmon Architect



through western Asia to the confines of Mesopotamia. All this mass of work, however, is without the refinement of Greek art; it is monotonous in its ostentation. Apart from a series of lifelike portraits (Plate XII), perhaps the greatest contribution to art is the Roman alphabet of "square" capitals, noble in form, and which we are reverting to at the present day as a standard of form in lettering (Fig. 3).

When Rome decayed, and the Goths, and German tribes set Europe in a turmoil, the Eastern Empire which we call Byzantine from the old name of Constantinople, carried on the classic arts, although with an eastern bias. Early in the period, Justinian's great church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) at Constantinople, with its great dome and semi-domes is perhaps the greatest example of architecture of any period, planned, as in other Byzantine churches, mainly for internal effect (Frontispiece). The study of the figure ceased owing to the iconoclast or image-breaking movement, derived from the old Israelitish objection to idols. Sculptured ornament degenerated into mere flat pierced and carved work, although it gained a delicate lace-like quality. Crafts such as ivory carving, mosaic, metal-work and jewellery took on a new splendour, quantities of beautiful work being produced, which, later, the Crusaders looted, and the study of it by the craftsmen of the west, had its share in producing that great outburst of mediæval art, which we call "Gothic," although the art of the Visi-Goths who had journeyed slowly across Europe from Russia to Spain had long been submerged.

Surrounded by enemies, the Byzantine empire was always at war, notably with the Saracens. By A.D. 650 the hordes of Islam were carrying all before them, and absorbing all that the peoples they conquered could teach them, including the Byzantines. They poured across Africa, crossed into Spain and there, from the eighth to the tenth century, they evolved a civilisation with a delicate and beautiful art which had no parallel further north. Their mosques and palaces with features derived from Byzantine and Persian sources, filled with horseshoe arcades, the columns, walls and domes enriched with pure ornament, for *representation* was forbidden as idolatrous, as well as their enamelled tiles, ivory carving, metal-work and weaving, all reveal the same spirit, a feeling



for beauty and pure pattern that was new to the world, although the architecture, like their civilisation, lacked solidity and structure (Plate XIII).

While this elegant art was flourishing in Spain, the north-west of Europe was struggling to rise from the barbarism into which the peoples were sunk during the centuries following the decay of Roman civilisation. After Charlemagne (who bequeathed the germ of our modern writing) there was again chaos, until, the "fatal" year 1000 came and gone without the sound of the dreaded "great trump," the monasteries with their fine churches arose. We call the period Romanesque, for the building was still round arched, and followed vaguely the style of Rome, whose remains still stood or lay everywhere. In Britain the Normans developed their particular style of architecture with arches enriched by the chevron and other motives, which we can see to-day in many of our great cathedrals as at Canterbury, Lincoln, Winchester and Durham.

Out of the massive, inert Romanesque style was to evolve mediæval architecture with its pointed arches and vaults, every thrust and pressure balanced by means of columns, counteracting arches and flying buttresses. A wealth of sculpture and carving formed the enrichment within and without, and the beauty of stained glass enhanced the interior, making of the great edifice as has been said, a magnificent jewelled casket. This wonderful period worked itself out during three centuries. It began with monastic piety; it flamed up in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with the devotion of the people, it finished during the fifteenth century as a monument to civic pride. Its end was hastened by the new movement spreading across Europe, the Renaissance. In Italy, classic feeling had never quite died out, and long before the Turks reached Constantinople, panels were being carved in the churches, which reveal the sculptors' study of the Greco-Roman remains. On the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Greek scholars fled from that last home of classic learning, carrying their manuscripts with them to Italy and elsewhere. Fresh interest was aroused in the art of ancient Rome; excavations were made in the debris of the past, and the use of the architectural orders was revived.

The Renaissance was certainly a period of immense architectural activity, yet the finest of its buildings cannot be said to more than match those of Greece and Rome, although, of course, adapted to later needs; nor did its statuary outvie that of Greece. No new style with new forms as in the mediæval period, evolved in Renaissance architecture and sculpture. So while there are many names famous for fine work in architecture, from Brunelleschi to Wren, and in sculpture, from Donatello to Epstein, we must omit them in order to discuss the art which now emerged, that of *painting*. The Egyptians had used simple colouring in distemper. The Cretans painted their walls in fresco and this method may have been handed down to the Greeks. Nothing remains to us of Greek painting from the best periods, although the Greco-Roman work in Pompeii may give us some idea of its late phases. These wall paintings look strangely modern with their high lights and shadows, natural colouring, well rounded figures, and illusion of distance. The work seems much nearer to our own time than that of the "primitive" painters of western Europe who flourished many hundreds of years later.

As already noted, Byzantine art had lost the classic traditions of figure painting. The figures of the saints became mere symbols, every attribute being prescribed by the church. The Byzantine churches were decorated with mosaic (as were those in Rome), a material which the Romans had used mainly for pavements, but now transferred to the walls. Although mosaic afforded rich and glowing colour, yet its technique, the handling of the tiny tesserae or cubes tended to suppress movement and structure, resulting in a flat, pattern-like treatment. In Italy, however, the teachings of St. Francis and the intellectual ferment caused by the new learning, freed the painters from the bondage of the Byzantine tradition, and the change will always be associated with the name of Giotto, who told the story of St. Francis on the walls of Assisi, with natural grouping, movement and even a suggestion of background (Plate VII). He was a great stimulus, and during the fourteenth century, painters followed in his steps, working in the service of the

church. In Siena, however, painting retained the traditional types and methods, and still used the Byzantine gold background.

In Florence during the fifteenth century, the interest in classic art and literature strongly affected the painters. The church demanded the greater share of their energies, but many painters insisted upon illustrating the pagan myths, which lent themselves to study of the human figure. So the age exhibited a mixture of ideals and interests. There is the saintly simplicity of Fra Angelico, the perspective science of Ucello revealed quaintly in his battle scenes, the anatomical knowledge of Pollaiuolo, and the learned composition and drawing of Masaccio many years ahead of his time. Botticelli working at the close of the century is the very symbol of the age. Leonardo da Vinci, scientist as well as painter foreshadowed the next period, when painters had become learned in their art, had cast off the primitive. The sixteenth century was full of ostentation, in churches as well as in palaces. Art had become worldly. No longer were people content with their portraits timidly occupying the corner of an altar piece; they wanted the whole canvas to be filled with themselves, and the art of portraiture arose. Oil painting had been introduced from Flanders, giving a power of representation and depth of colour far beyond what was possible with fresco, or tempera. Mantegna, the Bellini, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, were the giants of this period. The year 1500 saw them alive, save the two last, who came a little later, and whose vast compositions are the glory of Venice, a city always in touch with the East, fuller of colour and pageantry than elsewhere. During the seventeenth century in Italy, painters overwhelmed with the wealth of genius which had preceded them, fell away into mannered imitation. But at Naples the realist Caravaggio and his school influenced Spain, where flourished painters who looked at nature without "Italian spectacles." Velasquez is the master-name of realistic painting, and the greatest portrait painter of all time. The emotional "Il Greco" seemed out of place in Spain, and his work was not appreciated there, although we now hail him as the first "Post Impressionist." His earlier work,



The Passion

*National Gallery*

El Greco



Shepherds in Arcadia

N. Poussin



however, exhibited little or nothing of what his contemporaries called "madness" (Plate XIV).

In Flanders of the fifteenth century, rich from the cloth woven from English wool, a school of painters was at work, untouched by the intellectual activity of Italy. The thick, cloggy oil paint valued in the north for its resistance to damp, had been subdued to the painter's brush by the use of some vehicle which tradition attributes to the Van Eycks. Oil paint gave the painters what they loved, rich, deep yet glowing colour (Plate III). These "primitives," with their quaint stiff figures, yet precise drawing, and beautifully worked backgrounds, painted mainly for the church, although quite early they turned to portraiture.

During the sixteenth century the fame of the great painters of the south called many Flemings to study in Italy where they lost their clear colour and became mere "Italianizers." Rubens was the most famous, but his robust temperament did not permit him to copy merely. He is *the* painter of the Counter-Reformation and his great energetic compositions held their own against the "baroque" architecture of the time, with its twisted columns, broken pediments and swirling decoration.

Holland freed from the Spaniards, could settle down, in the seventeenth century to enjoy her home life, and her people wanted nothing more from painting than to see that life reproduced in clear form and colour, on tiny canvases suitable for the narrow houses, cramped together on the banks of the canals. Among these "little masters," Rembrandt stands out like a giant. One of the most original of painters, no one could represent the character of his model (often himself) more profoundly than he. Frans Hals also painted life-size, with deft strokes of the brush expressing almost the actual presence of the sitter.

In France, after the "primitive" period, painting was affected strongly by the Italian influence, and this dependence continued although French temperament and design made itself felt. Nicholas Poussin, going like all the other painters of the time to Rome, saw some of the newly recovered Greco-Roman paintings, as Raphael had before him, and the colour and atmosphere of his work reflected strongly the



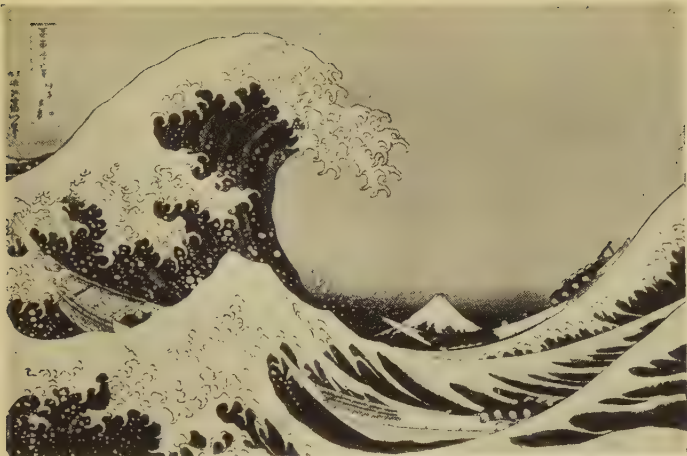
impression they made on him. His art has influenced French painting down to our own time (Plate XIV).

The reign of Louis XIV again tightened the Italian bonds. The palaces were decorated with gods and goddesses, great pompous paintings, with Alexander the Great brought in for comparison with Louis. All court life was public, and every portrait emphasised the official rank of the sitter. Rigaud painted the king with his robes and sceptre (Plate V), the cleric with his book, establishing a convention, with self-conscious and self-satisfied posing, such as we see in official portraits down to the present day.

During the reign of Louis XV, this pompous spirit made way for a more intimate yet more frivolous one. The gay life of the court, especially in its out door pleasures was illustrated in brilliant and sparkling canvases by Watteau; Boucher and Fragonard continued the theme. Nothing in these paintings suggests the catastrophe which was shortly to drench the land with blood.

The Revolution was the cause of painting reverting to the academic style, for David and his pupils painted pictures of the Romans of the Republic, in allusion to what had happened in France. The discoveries at Pompeii a few years after 1750 roused fresh interest in classic forms. But a new spirit had long been at work—the romantic—and this led to a struggle between classicism and romanticism. Ingres, a cold colourist, but learned draughtsman, and Delacroix, a fiery spirit revelling in tragedy and strong chords of colour were the protagonists. Corot abandoned his Italian hills and lakes and painted the willows of France, although the shade of Poussin prompted him to people his dim groves with nymphs. Theodore Rousseau, Dupré and others deserted Paris, to live in the little village of Barbizon, painting for dear life among the oaks of Fontainebleu. Millet the painter of peasant labour joined them later (Fig. 46).

Courbet in his vast canvases introduced a new tendency, that of realism, a vein already worked by Caravaggio and his school, and the brothers Le Nain. But it was the realism of subject and form. The colour was much what it had been; shadows were still brown and murky as in the canvases of the old masters. With Manet, who began to paint violet



The Hollow of the Deep Sea Wave off Kangawa  
*British Museum*

Hokusai



The Postman

Vincent van Gogh  
*Barnes Foundation, U.S.A.*



in his shadows, the Impressionist school began. Monet and others, became occupied with light rather than objects. They no longer *spread* their pigments, but placed touches of pure colour side by side on the canvas, trusting to the eye of the spectator to combine them. This "open-air" painting, while it taught painters the use of bright pigments and that there is colour even in shadow, was too limited in its outlook, and tendencies were already at work which were to create a spirit of controversy and unrest, unsettling the art of painting to this moment. The romantic spirit took on a new aspect, an interest in primitive life, that of the "noble savage," whose art has a child-like simplicity. With this was bound up a renewed interest in "pattern," which both the academic and impressionist painters had somewhat lost sight of. Three men, Cezanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin set painting on a new course. They broke definitely with academic methods and each demanded freedom to express himself according to his own temperament. These men, who received little or no recognition during their lives, have been the cause of endless controversies, experiments and "schools," and we cannot as yet see where the "new path" of art will lead (Plates VII, XV).

Of the German painters it will be sufficient to mention Durer, who lived when mediæval traditions were being submerged by the Renaissance. He was a master draughtsman and, like Rembrandt, a great illustrator and engraver.

In Britain, after the "primitive" period, foreigners like Holbein and Van Dyck were mostly in favour. These two set a standard in portraiture, which was upheld during the eighteenth century when Reynolds, Gainsborough and others painted a notable series of portraits. Hogarth the satirist (and fine portrait painter) lashed the vices of his time. Landscape painting followed at first the Dutch tradition; but was infused with fresh life by Constable, who may have influenced the Barbizon school, as later, Turner, the painter of light inspired the Impressionists. In 1850 a band of young men, among them Millais, Rosetti and Holman Hunt, disgusted with the dull academism of the figure painters of their day found in early Italian art, with its devout intention and striving after exactness of detail, the stimulus they needed.

They called themselves the *pre-Raphaelite* brotherhood, because they considered that Raphael, by his example, had caused painting to become worldly, trusting to facility in composition, grace of line, but lacking seriousness and truth. The brotherhood chose subjects of literary or mystical interest; they were, indeed, transcendental illustrators rather than painters and the art of painting was not, perhaps, furthered by them. To their influence and example, however, we owe a school of illustration which made of wood engraving a new art, and has led to the magazines of the "sixties" being collected eagerly. Among these illustrators, Keene, Millais, Houghton, Sandys, Pinwell, and Du Maurier stand out.

Since then, painting in Britain (and America) has followed the movements in France at a more or less leisurely pace.

So far we have followed the path of art as it can be traced in the West. What of the East, of India, China and Japan? Eastern art seems strange and exotic to the western eye, but if we inquire, we shall find that just as art led from the East to Greece and from thence to the West, so Greek art, through Alexander, that great conqueror and wanderer, reached India. We can trace Apollo in the images of Buddha, and the Corinthian capital in the Indian pillar bracket. By the eighth century A.D. the old faith, centred in Brahma the creative spirit, overwhelmed the Buddhist teaching, and from this time onwards the art which we know as Hindoo developed its characteristic style. Everywhere is symbolism with exuberant decoration. Later came another change, still to be seen in the way Brahmanism and the faith of Mohammad divide the people, for when about A.D. 1000 the Arabs (and later the Mongols) invaded India, the national art blended with that of the conquerors, and transformed it into a delicate and beautiful style, of which the Taj Mahal at Agra is a notable example.

Although in China there are monumental gateways and temples, and colossal images of Buddha, it is the art of painting which claims our consideration, yet so different are its ideals and methods from the western, that we may be tempted to pass it over as hard to understand. While Greece had accepted man as the supreme creation dominating all around him, in China, he was looked upon as only part of nature.



Parthénon. N.W. view



Group of Horsemen.

Frieze of Parthénon, N. side.

*British Museum*





Goodness and beauty were to be found equally in the smallest creature or blade of grass. Nor was Chinese art concerned with that tendency which we have inherited from the Renaissance, to create illusion, to depict objects in light and shade. Eastern painting is concerned with rhythm and clearly-defined contour, non-essentials being omitted. Japanese painting followed the great Chinese styles, but a development of the old Chinese craft of block printing took place in Japan during the seventeenth century, at a time when rigid class distinctions had erected a high barrier between the upper and the lower classes. The people, devoted to their theatre, welcomed the broad-sheets with portraits of their favourite actors. For the first time in the world's history, an art flourished entirely for and through the people, and one frowned on by the ruling class. A quantity of beautiful work was poured out of which only that by Hokusai can be mentioned here, for he ranks with Michael Angelo, Rubens and Blake in giving extraordinary vitality and range of movement to his figures, while his compositions hold attention by their strange points of view (Plate XV).

Of all the minor arts of India, China and Japan there is no space left in which to describe them. Indian carving, Chinese pottery and Japanese ivory and metal-work need a life-time for their study, as for the matter of that, do the corresponding crafts in Europe.

In the Western Hemisphere are the remains of ancient civilizations as that of the Mayas, followed by the Aztecs and Incas. Their stupendous architecture, like that of Malta seems to have been raised by people with stone tools. Perhaps this art drifted from the East in early times, but being isolated, it developed in its own way, with forms stranger and more forbidding even than those of India and China. The Spaniards destroyed these civilizations; the art ceased unlike that of Europe and Western Asia. The British lion and American eagle are examples of symbols persisting throughout the ages, for they are to be found in early Sumerian or Elamite Art.

## ART AS EDUCATION

"ART IN SCHOOL" was concerned with drawing as a spontaneous expression bubbling up in the young, as does speech, acting and dancing; it was shewn, too, to be a language, and a discipline. One might have added that it was also a method, for there are few subjects where drawing cannot be used to aid the visualising of the facts. As far as the primary schools are concerned drawing as an expression has been acknowledged to be of great importance. Even the children in the settlements of the Zionist movement in far-off Palestine use pencil and brush to express their reaction towards their environment. Again, when the first schools for defective children were opened, it was recognized that the "academic" studies, such as reading and arithmetic, could not be given the same prominence as obtained in ordinary schools. "These poor children will never shine as scholars," it was said, "let us occupy and amuse them with handwork." Varied occupations were devised, demanding the use of the hands and the attention of the eye, and it was found that these so-called defectives reacted marvellously to their surroundings and exercises; they were reaching the normal through hand work. This development is seen, too, in the very young normal child. Its rapid progress in speech and other attainments seems to be related to its constant activity. In its waking moments it is occupied with various forms of art; it dances, sings and draws. Drawing seems an art especially characteristic of youthful energy both in the race and the individual.

So far art consists in doing things, but higher up the scale does art study supply material for intellectual development, does it fulfil the requirements of a liberal education? The question has already been referred to in the Introduction; let us now discuss it in greater detail.

When we inquire into the position of drawing in the secondary schools we are met by a difficulty. Here the curriculum is dominated by the requirements of the examinations necessary if the pupil is to matriculate or enter a university. "Credits," or distinctions must be obtained in certain subjects, and drawing is not one of them, although it may figure in the syllabus of the school leaving certificate. Therefore schools tend to cut out drawing in the upper forms in order to give more time to the "credit" subjects, and the pupils deprived of graphic expression at a critical age, lose the creative impulse, the desire for expression, and with it an interest in form and colour. The continuity is broken, and when these young people enter college or university, degree work occupies their whole intellectual capacity, and art becomes a side issue, something which does not "matter," although in what is called the letters or arts side, the subjects are closely related with art, and often taught by specialists who may have a profound knowledge of archæology. Archæology is not necessarily art, however, and although the two seem in some subjects to stand side by side, yet so far as the instruction goes they may not be on speaking terms.

Why has art not been recognised as a study of academic status, and why are degrees in fine art not commonly conferred by universities in Britain? The parallel art of music has long received countenance but it is not yet generally conceded that there is such a thing as *art study*; *art work*, if we please, but not study. Here it is claimed to rank equally with other academic studies, and we will briefly discuss its chief aspects. It may be described as threefold in character. First comes that side which has been stressed so strongly in the past that many can discern nothing else; executant skill, ability to model, carve, paint or draw. Old-fashioned art teaching may have stopped there, which accounts for the popular notion that art is all copying, making painted things look real. Certainly to acquire skill in representation demands aptitude, with close application. In this section we must place some subjects which, although subsidiary in their nature, demand a formidable proportion of time from the student, such as "practical" geometry, perspective and

“artistic” anatomy. Lettering must be studied, although it is not claimed that only the art student needs it, for it lies at the basis of “letters.” To dot the capital I is literally to be “illiterate,” to lack a knowledge of letters.

The power of representation, however, is only a means to an end; if it is not used for a definite purpose it is sterile. The artist must have something to say, some message to deliver, and in its measure this aim appears in the humblest craft as well as in sculpture or painting. One may have to part company here with the sister art of music, for executant skill is sufficient to confer the title of musician, whereas in art copying is not enough, the art student reaches out to original work.

This is the second division of art study and success in it depends upon strenuous practice directed to the acquirement of skill. These two divisions may take up a great share of the art student’s daylight hours, but in addition there must be attention directed to the past, to the achievements of art, to what is known as art history, for without such study there is no standard by which the student can judge his own work.

This third division of art teaching corresponds in its aim and methods, as will be seen, exactly to study as conceived in universities. In the history of art and its achievements is a great group of subjects; architecture, sculpture, painting and the “decorative arts,” each occupies a wide field of study. In regard to earliest art where there are no records, the study of the art of these periods takes the place of history; it is all we have to make the past live, and it not seldom does so more effectively than documentary evidence. The cave art, the bronze ages, in Europe, early Sumeria, Crete and Egypt reveal their history through their art, and such study becomes doubly important.

Hitherto we have been considering the education of the art student through art, but there are many other studies which might claim a share in his training. Language is important for reading and visits abroad, ancient history correlates with ancient art, mediæval history accounts for the vigorous art of the middle ages, while literature might supply what the young artist necessarily lacks, experience of

life and its emotions. On the science side, a course of botany might be of service to the design student, the study of the chemistry of pigments and mordants has value to painter and dyer, and in the physics laboratories, the relation between light and colour could be made clear. If, however, the art student undertakes some or all of these subjects what time is left for specifically art study? It must always be remembered that what practical art study requires first and all the time is *daylight*; the precious hours must not be spent in the lecture room or the laboratory, and so one returns to the assertion that art study from its nature needs special and sympathetic consideration if it be adopted as university study. Again, the art student like the music student is born not made. All young children seem, as we have said already, to be artists, but only here and there is the creative impulse strong enough to persist in after life. It is important therefore that the art career of such students should not be interrupted during their last years at school or in college or university.

Hitherto, the universities having failed to deal with the subject, education in art has been given in our schools of art. These schools have to deal with very different classes of students. There are first those whose occupations have some connexions with art, and attend the school of art for *vocational* study either in the day or evening classes. Some schools have a junior section, where besides definitely art training, it has been found expedient to introduce subjects of general culture. Another important group consists in students preparing to become art teachers and these undertake the threefold course already described. A further class of student has not as yet found its way into the school of art to any great extent. Our future captains of industry and our budding manufacturers are exhorted to go to the university for culture and a broad outlook on the conditions of society. A great deal may be said for this course, but, as Mr. John Platt, head of the Leicester College of Art, has pointed out, it is equally of importance that those destined to occupy prominent positions in industry should give some time to study in a school of art. What would they learn there? Schools of art are still supposed by Rip van Winkles



to be frequented by old and young ladies desirous of learning to paint in water colours as an "accomplishment," although it has been shewn that that is far from being the case. In many quarters little is known of the range and usefulness of these institutions. Our student manufacturer may find in the school of art, in the first place, the workpeople he will later employ. He will see, in the junior section, how these young folk are trained, not indeed as apprentices are trained, but educated in the principles underlying industrial art. The complicated machinery by means of which industry is carried on is not needed here. In weaving, for instance, the teaching starts from the spinning of the raw wool from the sheep's back into yarn and proceeds to the washing and dyeing of it. The hand-loom will produce the same characteristic stripes and patterns which will be reproduced under industrial conditions by vast and intricate machinery.

These primitive forms and processes of craft-work afford valuable lessons, illustrating as they do the progress of the industry from its inception. Of course in a school of art in an industrial district, the student may find highly technical departments in close touch with mechanical manufacture outside.

The practical exercises such a student as we have had in mind may accomplish, although not up to the level of those with executant ability, yet will afford an insight into the essential conditions so far as art is concerned, of his business, which he might otherwise fail to acquire.

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